

Recommendations for EBRI Implementation
Illinois Community College Board
Adult Education and Family Literacy Advisory Council
C&I Committee
May 6, 2011

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee has addressed its charge to review the integration of evidence based strategies and submits the following information to the Illinois Community College Board and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Advisory Council.

- The C&I Committee searched for different models of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI). It was discovered that EBRI is not a model, but elements reflecting best practices as outlined in the results of empirical research studies (in 2002 and 2010 J.R. Kruidenier reports) and consensus among expert practitioners (Susan McShane's *Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults*.)
- The Adult Learning Resource Center (ALRC) helped gather information for the committee by:
 - Providing a detailed explanation of the elements of EBRI and lessons learned from currently implementing programs.
 - Conducting a written survey of Illinois adult education programs which have staff and instructors who completed the six-day STAR training to identify the status of EBRI implementation. [*PLEASE NOTE* that STAR is national professional development. STAR training was developed for implementing EBRI with ABE intermediate-level students (NRS ABE levels 3 & 4). ABE intermediate-level students include English language learners who have transitioned from ESL classes and have TABE scores between 4.0 – 8.9 GLE. The practices presented in the training are also applicable for teaching reading to advanced ESL students (NRS ESL levels 5 & 6). STAR training has not been designed for teaching reading to beginning ABE or ESL or intermediate ESL learners.]
 - Analyzing survey results to categorize programs as 1) fully implementing EBRI, 2) partially implementing EBRI or 3) not implementing EBRI at all.
 - Designing an interview form to gather information from programs that had fully implemented EBRI for their ABE intermediate-level learners. [Fully implemented meant that the students in STAR classes had diagnostic reading assessments in all four components, instruction was based upon assessment results, and instruction was delivered through direct and explicit instruction.]
- The C&I Committee conducted interviews with programs identified by the survey and reviewed information gathered to help form the recommendations contained within this document.

Adult education classrooms consist of learners who enter with different reading abilities. EBRI practices have programs assess learners within each of the four reading components and teachers guide instruction based upon assessment results. Assessment results help teachers divide students into leveled groups and deliver direct and explicit instruction that will develop stronger reading skills. Student progress is monitored during instruction.

The following information is taken from the Introduction of *“A Summary of Scientifically Based Research Principles. Teaching Adults to Read.”* written by Mary E. Curtis and John R. Kruidenier, and supports the committee’s finding of the need for EBRI integration into the adult education classroom.

“Teaching reading is a complex undertaking, especially when the learner is an adult. Unlike children, adult learners cannot spend several hours in a classroom every day. Most adults learning to read find it difficult to attend classes at all; those who enroll in a basic education program can spend, at most, a few hours a week working on their reading. When adult students arrive in the classroom, they can be at just about any level in their reading development, from beginning readers working on the fundamentals to more advanced readers ready to begin study for a high school level equivalency diploma. Emotional factors such as motivation, engagement, and fear of failure play a major role in reading success. These feelings can be especially intense for adults, particularly for learners who have spent years struggling with reading and hiding their inability to read from family members, friends, coworkers, and employers.”

Implementing programs interviewed shared their positive experiences with the committee:

- “You can really feel as an instructor that you know what you need to focus upon. It helps you focus as a reading teacher should. It breaks everything down into components, and that is more helpful than the TABE.”
- “We are seeing fast gains in post-test scores. Many students moved up one to two grade levels in a semester.”
- “Students responded very positively to the program. They have already completed two simplified novels. They liked reading stories that were more than just short passages. They gained confidence in their reading which carried over to the core textbook.”

The most common challenges identified by programs include:

- Securing enough help from staff and volunteers to administer assessments in a timely fashion.
- Obtaining resources for leveled instructional materials for each component of EBRI.
- Having enough physical space or different rooms to do assessments.
- Having a concern with consistency in programs when utilizing multiple assessors during the assessment process.
- Implementing EBRI becomes more challenging when coordinating responsibilities are spread among several staff.

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee submits the following recommendations based upon the research and information summarized above:

Recommendations For The ICCB

- Maintain EBRI as a voluntary initiative while providing encouragement to programs to begin implementation.
- Deliver six-day STAR training to providers regionally.
- Create a recognized EBRI credential which can be awarded to individuals who complete the six-day STAR training.
- Develop an avenue for individuals to earn graduate credit upon completion of specific training relative to EBRI.
- Provide start-up funds (grants) to programs to help implement EBRI. Allow implementation to begin as a pilot then expand over a period of time. Funds would be utilized in training program teams (i.e., administrators, instructors, classroom aides, testing staff), salary for EBRI coordinator, purchase of grade-leveled materials, etc.
- Expand the partnership with the Secretary of State's Literacy Program to include the use of adult volunteer literacy tutors in assisting with administering EBRI assessments.
- Develop a data collection function in Dais-I which will identify students receiving EBRI and monitor educational functioning level gains.
- Provide additional certified trainers state wide to deliver the six-day Star training and support Illinois adult education program staff and teachers.

Recommendations For The Service Center Network

- To encourage interest in EBRI, disseminate information about the public STAR and LINC's websites and other resources that contain information and assistance relative to EBRI.
- Offer a shorter, one-day EBRI training/overview for administrators.
- Provide information from the STAR training and online Tool Kit that will support programs during and after implementation. Information should include, but not be limited to:
 - Suggested resources for leveled instructional materials in each EBRI component
 - The elements of EBRI
 - Examples of lessons and activities in using direct and explicit instruction
 - Instructional Guide Form
 - Programmatic suggestions that best support EBRI to include:
 - Managed enrollment
 - A leveled classroom
 - Multiple instructors (i.e., teacher and classroom aide) for a multi-level classroom—limiting the multi-level aspect of the class
 - Leveled student materials and professional resource books
 - How to monitor student progress in each of the components

- Processes and a matrix to organize the class into groups using diagnostic assessment
- Disseminate information about the online STAR booster training sessions that are currently being developed as follow-up to the six-day STAR training.
- After training, provide follow-up/technical assistance to implementing programs, i.e., help in grouping students for instruction within classrooms, identify lesson resources, and establish provider groups.
- Design an electronic matrix for diagnostic assessments to help teachers determine/organize groups within the classroom.

Recommendations For Individual Programs

- Organize an EBRI team which includes instructors and at least one administrator who will participate in the six-day STAR training. The successful implementation of EBRI into a program relies upon the support and collaboration of administrative and instructional staff.
- Assign one individual as EBRI coordinator (within an APC or individual programs) to schedule classes, insure that instructors have needed resources and materials, train assessors, facilitate curriculum meetings, regularly review assessment procedures, help administer assessments, etc.
- Administer EBRI assessments to any student in a classroom reading at or below an 8.9 GLE and place them within a leveled group. Diagnostic assessments associated with EBRI are appropriate for all levels of instruction. This process should result in fewer groups within a multi-level classroom and simplify EBRI implementation.
- Review assessment procedures within the program at regular intervals to help maintain consistency among the assessors.