

# SOAR

Learning & Soft Skills 3.0

## Curriculum Guide

by Susan Kruger Winter, M.Ed.





## Dear Educators,

As someone who once struggled in school, I deeply understand the challenges many students face. Those experiences have become my greatest asset in creating the *SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills* program. I know how overwhelming school can be without effective strategies—and how life-changing it is to find tools that work!

I discovered many of these strategies during college, but I've spent the past two decades studying why they work. In this third edition of SOAR, we introduce a simple model—*The Brain Circuit™*—to teach students the brain biology of learning. This empowers them to understand how their brains work and why each SOAR strategy is so effective.

SOAR is intentionally designed to be relevant, accessible, and motivating for students at every level. It's a one-of-a-kind program that equips them with the executive function and strategic learning skills they need for success in school—and beyond.

To see a demo of our software tools, go to [StudySkills.com/demo](https://StudySkills.com/demo). For a quote, please see the back cover.

To our students' success,

Susan Kruger Winter, M.Ed.  
Founder & Author, *SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills*

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# About SOAR<sup>®</sup>

Today’s students lack the skills to effectively organize, process, manage, prioritize, and learn from the overwhelming information they face. This challenge is amplified by technology, which increases access to information while making it more “invisible,” often buried behind passwords, links, and clicks.

## What Is SOAR?

SOAR<sup>®</sup> *Learning & Soft Skills* (or SOAR<sup>®</sup> *Study Skills*) is a curriculum that equips students with essential learning, organization, and communication skills for success in school and the workplace. Since 2007, the curriculum has supported academic achievement. Now in its third edition, SOAR features updated content and enhanced design, integrating software and hard-copy tools for modern learners.

## What Does SOAR Cover?

SOAR focuses on executive function and strategic learning skills that benefit all students; struggling students gain accessible strategies for organization and learning, while straight-A students find tools to reduce stress and anxiety.

### These executive function skills include:

- How to set goals and achieve them
- How to organize: papers, digital files, space, and time
- How to communicate with teacher and peers
- How to give presentations
- How to record progress and keep moving forward

### These strategic learning skills include:

- How to read textbooks and nonfiction (quickly and with full comprehension)
- How to take notes
- How to study and learn new terms
- How to take tests
- How to write paragraphs and essays (includes a *Revising & Editing Decoder* to support learning of grammar and punctuation through students’ own writing)


However, most students aren’t ready to dive into these strategies “cold.” They need to understand *why* the strategies work and, more importantly, believe in themselves enough to care.

For this reason, SOAR’s first three lessons focus on three key topics to inspire motivation:

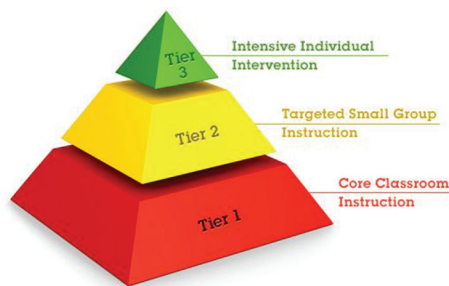


### 3rd Edition

Essential skills for success in school and beyond, SOAR<sup>®</sup> is now in its third edition, with updated content and integrated tools.

 <b>Table of Contents</b>	
Lesson #	
HOW Are You Smart?	<b>1</b> Why Study Skills?
	<b>2</b> What Are Your Strengths & Superpowers?
	<b>3</b> How Does Your Brain Learn?
Set goals	<b>4</b> Identify Your Priorities
	<b>5</b> Create Your Goals
	<b>6</b> Manage Time & Take Action
Organize	<b>7</b> Organize Your Papers & Digital Files
	<b>8</b> Organize Your Space
	<b>9</b> Organize Your Time & Manage Your Energy
Ask questions	<b>10</b> How to Read Nonfiction (hardcopy & online)
	<b>11</b> How to Communicate with Teachers & Peers
	<b>12</b> How to Listen & Take Notes
	<b>13</b> How to Study & Learn New Terms (includes “How to Study Math”)
	<b>14</b> How to Take Tests
	<b>15</b> How to Write Paragraphs & Essays
	<b>16</b> How to Learn Correct Grammar & Punctuation
	<b>17</b> How to Give a Presentation
R.P.	<b>18</b> How to Track Progress & Keep Moving Forward

SOAR equips students with executive function and learning strategies, starting with a section titled “HOW are you smart?”



**Three Tiers of Support**  
SOAR is perfect for Tier I, II, and III interventions.

## Lesson 1: Why Study Skills?

Students often ask, “Why do I need this? When will I use it?” In this lesson, they explore those answers, discovering these skills are both essential *and* among the top “most in-demand” employability skills!

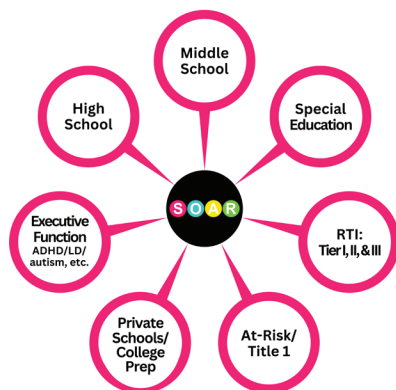
## Lesson 2: What Are Your Strengths & Superpowers?

Students learn the Theory of Multiple Intelligences and concept of “superpowers” to explore their strengths, fostering intrinsic motivation and a classroom culture that supports students’ strengths, rather than defining them by their challenges.

## Lesson 3: How Does Your Brain Learn

Students love learning how their brain works! This lesson introduces *The Brain Circuit™*, a model showing the brain biology of learning. Each lesson ends by showing how the strategies work in the brain, reinforcing their impact.

# Who Is SOAR® For? Will It Meet Our Needs?



SOAR teaches lifelong skills based on first principles of learning, making it suitable for diverse ages, abilities, and goals.

SOAR is designed for grades 6–12 but is also used with students as young as 4th/5th grade\* and by several post-secondary institutions. It supports college-prep schools and is an effective Tier I, II, and III intervention tool for MTSS, RTI, and IDEA.

SOAR’s adaptability comes from its foundation in first principles of learning and alignment with how the brain learns most efficiently. It’s ideal for school-wide instruction, executive function IEP goals, and 504 plans, with flexibility for whole-class, small group, or individual interventions.

\* For younger students, our 2nd Edition may be more suitable. Contact [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) for details.

# Is SOAR Aligned with Standards?

## Alignments



SOAR covers 100% of Common Core, ELA (grades 6–12\*), ACT WorkKeys, TEKS, and more. Details at [StudySkills.com/alignments](http://StudySkills.com/alignments).

Yes, SOAR covers:

- 100% of Common Core Anchor Standards
- 100% of all ELA standards for grades 6–12\*
- 100% of ACT WorkKeys, CPalms, TEKS, and more

See our comprehensive standards mapping at [StudySkills.com/alignments](http://StudySkills.com/alignments). (For additional or updated alignment mapping, email us at [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) with a link or attachment to the specific standards needed.)

\* With the addition of our Fiction Story Map. See “SOAR as an ELA Credit” on Page 11. Otherwise, SOAR covers 100% of all *non-literature* ELA standards.)

# How Does SOAR® Work?

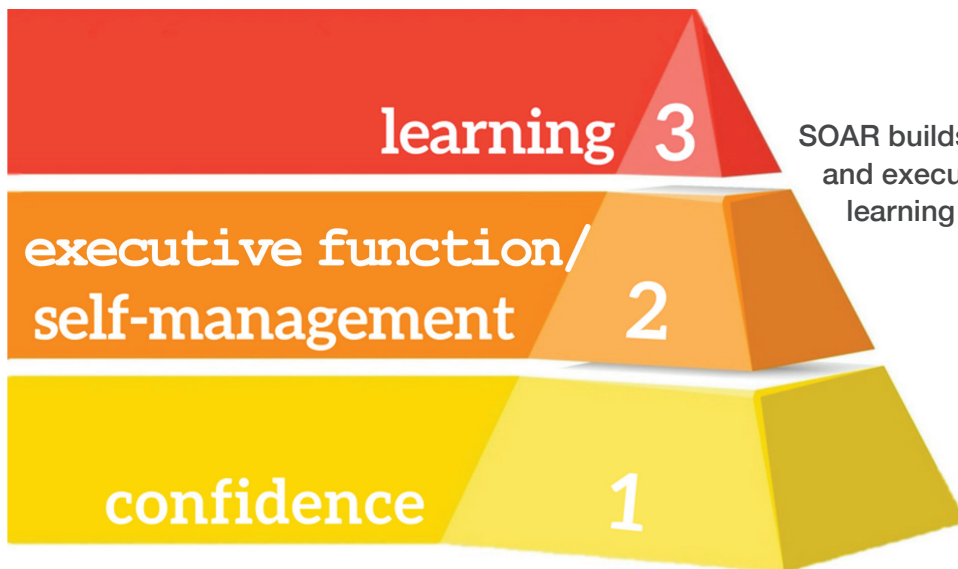
## In terms of technology ...

SOAR offers flexible options: students can use a book, an app (web-based), or both. The app works on all major platforms (PC, Mac, Chromebook, Android, iOS) with just a web browser and internet connection.

## In terms of instructional design ...

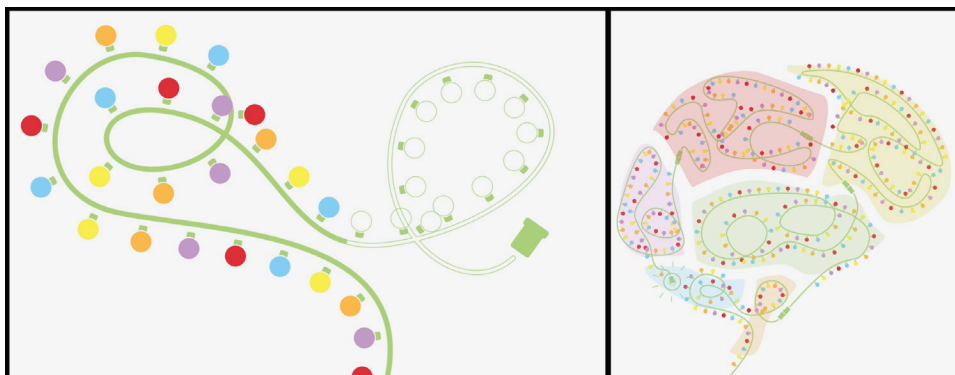
SOAR aligns with two brain-based models—the Learning Success Pyramid and the Brain Circuit—which highlight the essential biology of learning.

**The Learning Success Pyramid highlights the key components of learning at a macro level.** Traditional teaching often “throws” information at students, in a top-down approach, missing two critical foundational layers: emotional safety (confidence) and executive function skills (self-management and organization). SOAR lessons first build these foundations, then teach strategies aligned with *The Brain Circuit™* to optimize learning.



SOAR builds a strong foundation of confidence and executive function skills, then optimizes learning with Brain Circuit™ strategies.

***The Brain Circuit™* model shows that learning works like an electrical circuit, activated only when new information connects to prior knowledge.** “Asking questions” (the “A” in SOAR) is a universal shortcut for building these connections, optimizing learning, reducing cognitive friction, and conserving brain energy. This streamlines learning, making it faster, more efficient, and more motivating!

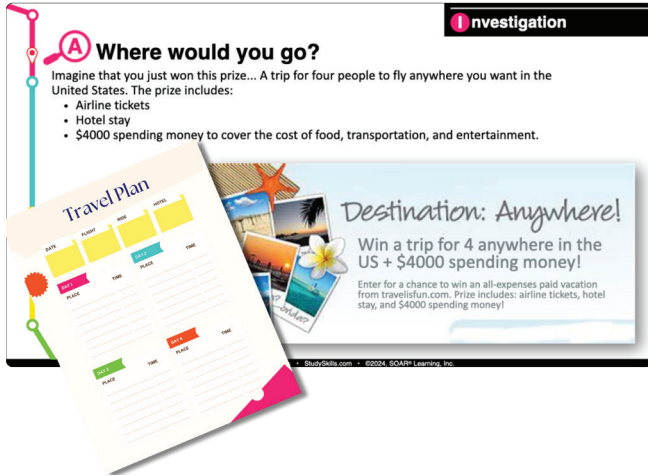


Learning functions like an electrical circuit, activated when new information connects to prior knowledge. SOAR strategies efficiently build these links.



SOAR offers flexible technology options (book, software app, or both) and aligns with brain-based models to enhance learning.

# How Does SOAR® Engage Students?



Student engagement is the cornerstone of our curriculum design! As noted, the course begins with the “HOW are you smart?” unit, where students explore their strengths, superpowers, and how their brains work—topics that captivate all learners.

To meet students’ need for relevance and efficiency, each lesson opens by addressing common school challenges it aims to solve. Students then participate in an “Investigation” activity to quickly identify the relevance of the topic and activate prior knowledge, paving the way for seamless connections to new information.

Inquiry-based questions activate prior knowledge. For example, in Lesson 6, “Manage Time & Take Action,” students use a travel plan to learn how to create action plans—building on goals from Lesson 5.

SOAR then teaches highly effective *and* efficient strategies, explaining why they work so students see their immediate value.

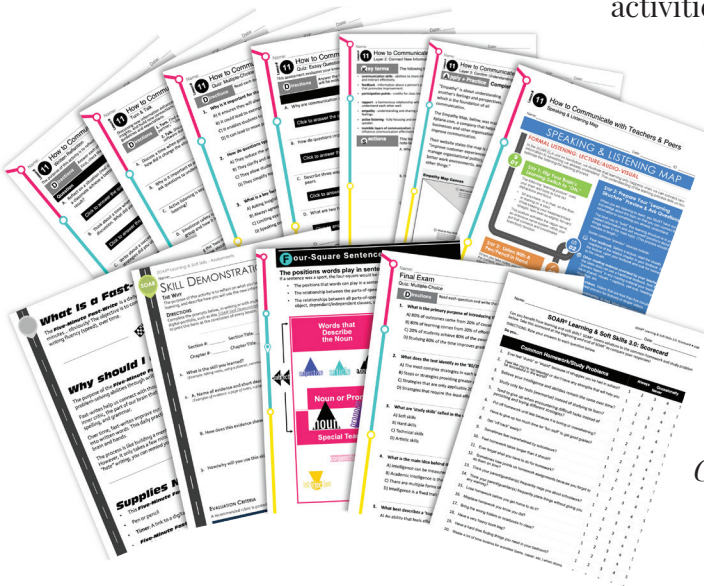
SOAR keeps students engaged with relevant content, curiosity-driven activities, intuitive design, multimedia, and interactive feedback. For more engagement strategies, visit [StudySkills.com/educators/guided-practice](https://StudySkills.com/educators/guided-practice).

# What Assessments Does SOAR Include?

SOAR provides eight types of assessments, ranging from “knowledge of content” to “application of strategies.” Pre/post evaluations and multiple-choice quizzes are tracked in the software, while rubrics support activities and formative assessments. With more assessments

than most teachers will use in a full year, SOAR offers flexible options to meet any need. (The *Pacing Guide* provides examples of which assessments to use and when.)

To simplify LMS gradebook setup, SOAR includes an Assessment Matrix (editable spreadsheet) listing assignments, assessments, and observations for upload. Additionally, the *Eight-Step Getting Started Guide* provides clear guidelines for assigning letter grades. For more details, see Step 8 of our *Eight-Step Getting Started Guide* at [StudySkills.com/eight-steps](https://StudySkills.com/eight-steps).

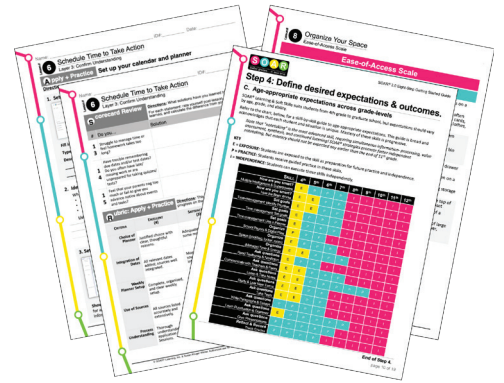


SOAR provides eight assessment types, including: pre/post evaluations, MC quizzes, rubrics, and an editable Assessment Matrix for easy gradebook setup. Learn more at [StudySkills.com/assessments](https://StudySkills.com/assessments).

# How Does SOAR® Support Differentiation?

SOAR strategies inherently support differentiation by addressing gaps in the learning process with clear, explicit instruction on effective and efficient strategies. This often reduces the need for traditional differentiation by equipping all students with tools to succeed. However, SOAR also includes several built-in differentiation features, such as:

- The Brain Circuit™ Model, illustrating how strategies create “detours” around challenges.
- Audio narration in the student software.
- Strategic use of visuals, captions, and layered learning techniques.
- Differentiated evaluation rubrics.
- Differentiated expectations, as outlined on SOAR’s Continuum of Age-Appropriate Expectations.



SOAR supports all learners with tools for success and features like The Brain Circuit™, audio narration, and tailored rubrics.

## Is SOAR’s 2nd Edition Better for You?

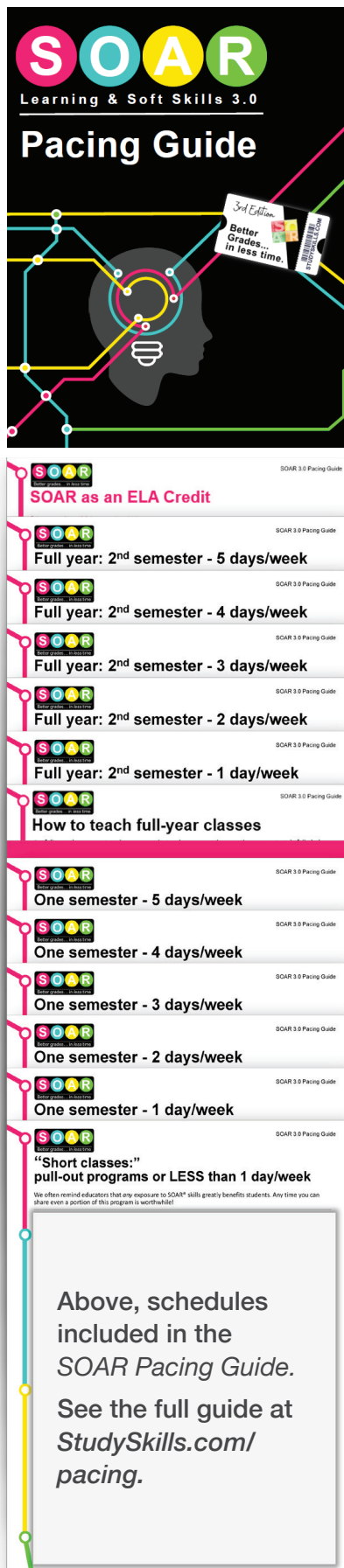
At SOAR®, we know one size doesn’t fit all in education. That’s why we’re continuing to offer our 2nd Edition curriculum alongside *SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills 3.0*. While the 3rd Edition includes updated content, modern graphics, technology integration, and innovative “Investigations,” some schools and students benefit from a more foundational approach.

The 2nd Edition preserves SOAR’s core strategies while providing a simpler framework for developing essential learning and organizational skills. It’s ideal for younger students, emerging learners, or programs seeking a more streamlined approach. By offering both editions, we ensure educators can choose the version that best meets their students’ needs. For more information about the 2nd Edition, contact us at [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com).



SOAR’s 2nd edition provides a simpler, foundational approach, perfect for younger students or emerging learners. Contact [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) for details.

# How Much Instructional Time Is Required?



SOAR® accommodates any schedule, from brief 1:1 “pull-out” sessions to daily lessons over a full year. The *Pacing Guide* presents a dozen sample schedules (see left) ranging from:

- Programs shorter than a semester, to
- Full-year, five-day-per-week plans, and even
- SOAR as an ELA credit! (Details on Page 11.)

The *Pacing Guide* helps teachers prioritize lessons to fit their schedule as SOAR offers more resources than even a full-year, five-day-per-week program could use.

Each “schedule” shows examples of how to use and prioritize the SOAR materials within specific time constraints. Pick the best fit for your schedule or use the examples as a framework to create your own.

See the full *Pacing Guide* at [StudySkills.com/pacing](https://StudySkills.com/pacing).

## How can one curriculum be so flexible?

Every school has a unique combination of time and resources for teaching these skills. SOAR is designed to accommodate this vast range of needs and help educators tailor the curriculum to their schedules and objectives, by:

### Prioritizing lessons.

Any exposure to these skills is infinitely better than none, as it helps students see the value of strategy in learning! When time is limited, the Pre-Scorecard Assessment identifies the most relevant lessons, while the *Pacing Guide* offers a default set of priorities.

### Focusing on applied practice, not “filling time” with more content.

Extra time should allow for *applying* strategies, allowing students to internalize skills.

### Delivering content in three layers:

- **Layer 1: Collect prior knowledge.** This layer uses inquiry-style questions to activate prior knowledge, promote engagement, and address the “why” behind each lesson, reducing the time needed for subsequent instruction.
- **Layer 2: Connect new information.** This layer delivers the new information and strategies.
- **Layer 3: Confirm understanding.** This layer provides a *buffet* of optional activities, assessments, and enrichment materials like articles and videos. These allow educators to customize lessons, differentiate instruction, and deepen learning.

## Do lessons need to be taught in order?

Lessons can be taught in any order, as each stands alone. However, when time permits, teaching them sequentially is ideal as they build on one another, fostering a cohesive approach to learning and executive function skills.



# How Teacher-Friendly Is the SOAR® Curriculum?



Lesson 6: Manage Time & Take Action

## Layer 2 Directory



**Key terms & concepts**



**Section A**  
What is time-management?



**Section B**  
Optimal time-management tools



**Section C**  
What are time-management blockers?



**Section D**  
Time-management tools: digital vs paper



**Section E**  
How and when to manage your time



**Section F**  
What is the most critical anchor point?



**Making the invisible, visible**



**The brain on...**



**SOAR Notes: Lesson 6**

The Multi-Media Presentation Tool effortlessly guides teachers through the lessons.

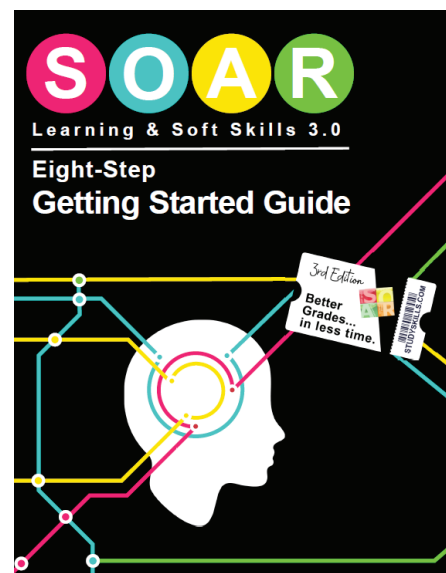
SOAR's turn-key lessons, featuring a multimedia presentation tool, make implementation easy with minimal prep time. New teachers can learn alongside students, while experienced teachers have the flexibility to customize materials as needed or desired.

SOAR also provides a user-friendly, *Eight-Step Getting Started Guide*. It covers key topics in eight, quick steps, from logging in to setting objectives and assigning letter grades. (Access the full guide at [StudySkills.com/eight-steps](https://StudySkills.com/eight-steps).)

Additional onboarding resources for teachers and parents are available at [StudySkills.com/onboard](https://StudySkills.com/onboard).

## Is Training Needed?

While training isn't required, it's recommended for schools or districts with three or more teachers using SOAR. Most opt for a 90-minute virtual session, though in-person training is also available. Visit [StudySkills.com/training](https://StudySkills.com/training) for more details.



See the full, user-friendly guide at [StudySkills.com/eight-steps](https://StudySkills.com/eight-steps).

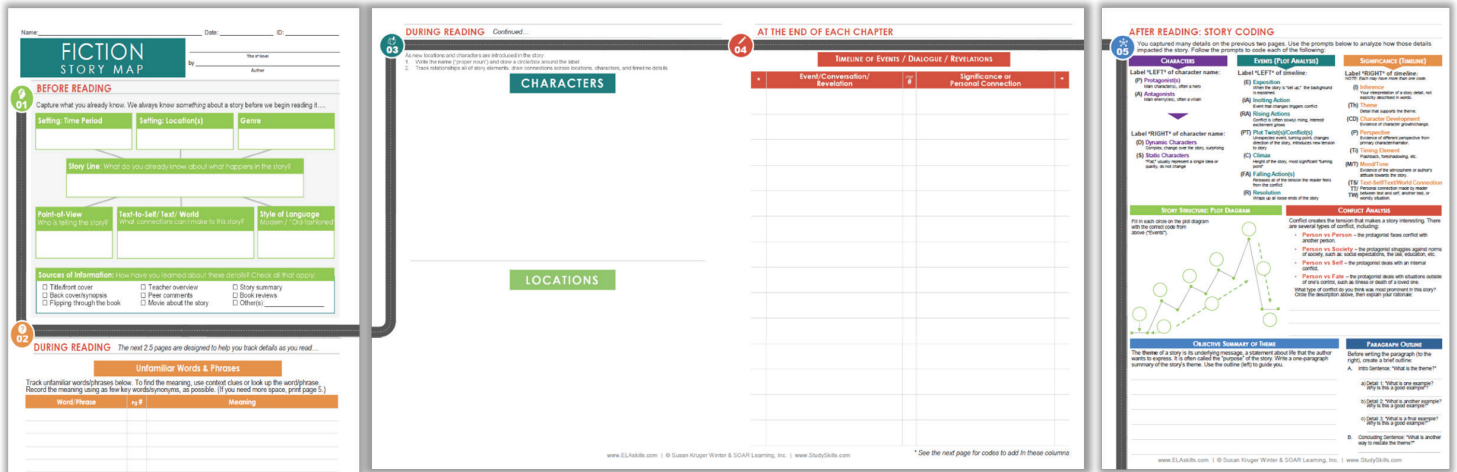
# What Is Included? What More Is Needed?

SOAR® includes the Multi-Media Teacher's Guide (an online portal with comprehensive tools and content) and your choice of student workbooks and/or software app licenses. Recommended supplies, like binders and poly folders, replace standard notebooks and folders to enhance instruction. These resources support engaging, structured lessons that develop essential study skills across subjects. For details, visit [StudySkills.com/materials](http://StudySkills.com/materials).

Included with all curriculum purchases	You choose ONE of the following options	Additional Recommended Supplies (optional):
<div data-bbox="127 530 584 808"> </div> <p data-bbox="127 825 510 858"><b>Multi-Media Teacher's Guide</b></p> <ul data-bbox="127 858 554 987" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional slides</li> <li>• Assessments</li> <li>• Gradebook (for use with student software)</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="329 1026 393 1058" style="text-align: center;"><b>Plus</b></p> <p data-bbox="127 1101 307 1134"><b>SOAR Notes</b></p> <p data-bbox="127 1134 584 1198">Editable/printable PDF for notes and practice activities</p>	<div data-bbox="611 530 1068 808"> </div> <p data-bbox="611 825 934 858"><b>Software App Licenses</b></p> <ul data-bbox="611 858 1028 987" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive, multi-media learning experience</li> <li>• Data collection</li> <li>• Audio narration</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="719 1037 950 1332"> </div> <p data-bbox="611 1345 702 1377"><b>Books</b></p> <ul data-bbox="611 1377 850 1474" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No-tech</li> <li>• Tangible resource</li> <li>• Easy reference</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="601 1511 1071 1776"> </div> <p data-bbox="611 1798 937 1830"><b>Software Apps + Books</b></p> <ul data-bbox="611 1830 1061 1959" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive, multi-media instruction and data-collection</li> <li>• Reinforced with easy-to-reference material when applying strategies</li> </ul>	<div data-bbox="1155 530 1496 918"> </div> <p data-bbox="1113 933 1323 965"><b>“SOAR Binder”</b></p> <p data-bbox="1113 965 1276 998">Per student:</p> <ul data-bbox="1113 998 1471 1127" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 1.5-inch view binder with interior pockets</li> <li>• 1 poly folder per class</li> <li>• Looseleaf notebook paper</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="1113 1166 1559 1435"> </div> <p data-bbox="1113 1450 1421 1483"><b>3-D Writing Organizer</b></p> <p data-bbox="1113 1483 1276 1515">Per student:</p> <ul data-bbox="1113 1515 1387 1623" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 file-folder</li> <li>• 3–4 No. 6 envelopes</li> <li>• 15–30 index cards</li> </ul>

# SOAR<sup>®</sup> as an ELA Credit

SOAR<sup>®</sup> Learning & Soft Skills naturally meets 100% of grades 6–12 non-literature ELA standards. By adding the *Fiction Story Map* module, it also addresses literature standards, making it a complete ELA curriculum for grades 6–12 and eligible for ELA credit. This option eliminates the need to “squeeze” SOAR into the schedule or require students to give up electives.



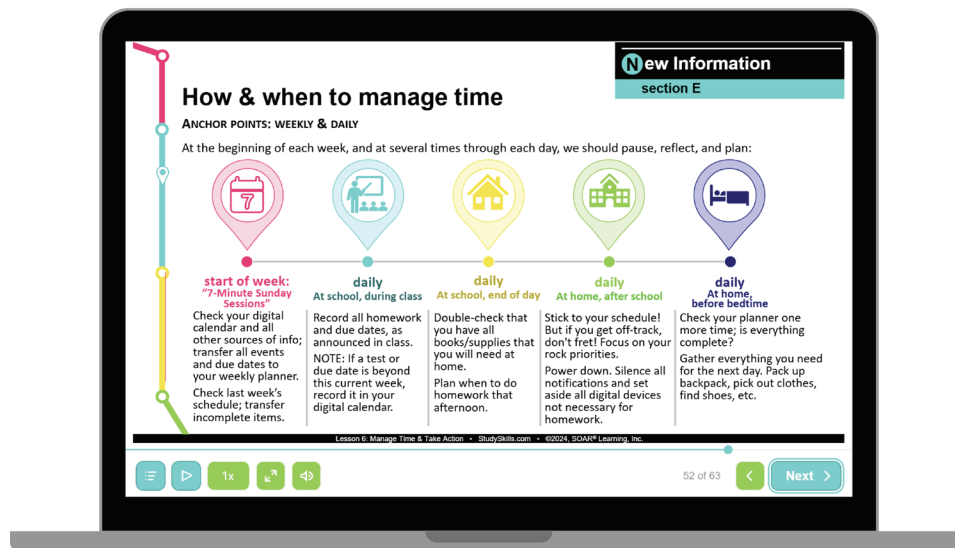
For example, SOAR can be used for:

- **Tier I Instruction:** ELA credit + independent learning skills for all students entering middle or high school as a year-long “orientation” course.
- **Tier II Intervention:** ELA credit + independent learning skills for struggling or at-risk students, replacing the need to take away electives.

SOAR offers a fresh approach to ELA, focusing on transferable skills that support students in secondary and post-secondary ELA courses—and beyond! For more information, contact [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) to schedule a call with a SOAR curriculum consultant.

The SOAR Fiction Story Map is a 4-page module guiding students through any fiction work. It completes SOAR’s ELA standards coverage (grades 6–12), allowing it to serve as a full ELA credit for Tier I or II, without students sacrificing electives.

## See a Demo!



Explore a sample lesson in our student app, along with other valuable resources for teachers and students at [StudySkills.com/demo](https://StudySkills.com/demo).

# How Can I Trust SOAR®?

## What Is the Research Basis?

The *SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills Curriculum* is grounded in research-based theories, such as: Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, Dweck’s Mindset, and Bloom’s Taxonomy, etc. Each section aligns with proven strategies to build cognitive, organizational, and interpersonal skills, offering a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to learning. For more details, visit [StudySkills.com/educators/research-basis](http://StudySkills.com/educators/research-basis).

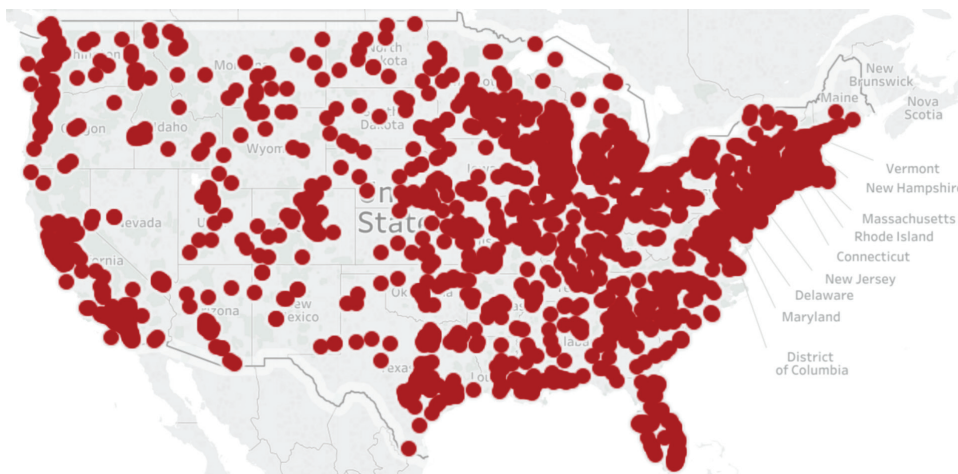
SOAR applies proven learning practices supported by extensive research. See our ever-growing list of research-based references at [StudySkills.com/research-basis](http://StudySkills.com/research-basis).

The composite image includes three main components:

- Mindset Book Cover:** Shows the cover of 'Mindset: The New Psychology of Success' by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D., updated edition. It features a purple and blue color scheme and the text 'HOW WE CAN LEARN TO FULFILL OUR POTENTIAL'.
- Multiple Intelligences Diagram:** A circular diagram with eight segments representing different intelligences: Music Smart (yellow), Body Smart (red), People Smart (green), Word Smart (blue), Logic Smart (orange), Nature Smart (light blue), Self Smart (light green), and Picture Smart (light yellow). The center is labeled 'MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES'.
- Bloom's Taxonomy Pyramid:** A pyramid with six levels from top to bottom: create, evaluate, analyze, apply, understand, and remember. To the right of the pyramid is a list of verbs for each level:
  - Produce new or original work:** Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate
  - Justify a stand or decision:** appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh
  - Draw connections among ideas:** differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test
  - Use information in new situations:** execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch
  - Explain ideas or concepts:** classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate
  - Recall facts and basic concepts:** define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

## Who Uses SOAR?

SOAR is used in over 4,500 U.S. schools and 51 countries worldwide, trusted by public and private institutions alike. Explore the map at [StudySkills.com/map](http://StudySkills.com/map).



SOAR is widely used by educational institutions across the U.S. and internationally, with over 4,500 schools nationwide and a presence in 51 countries. Its broad adoption reflects the program’s strong reputation among both public and private schools for enhancing learning and study skills. Find an interactive map at [StudySkills.com/map](http://StudySkills.com/map).

# What Have Others Said About SOAR®?

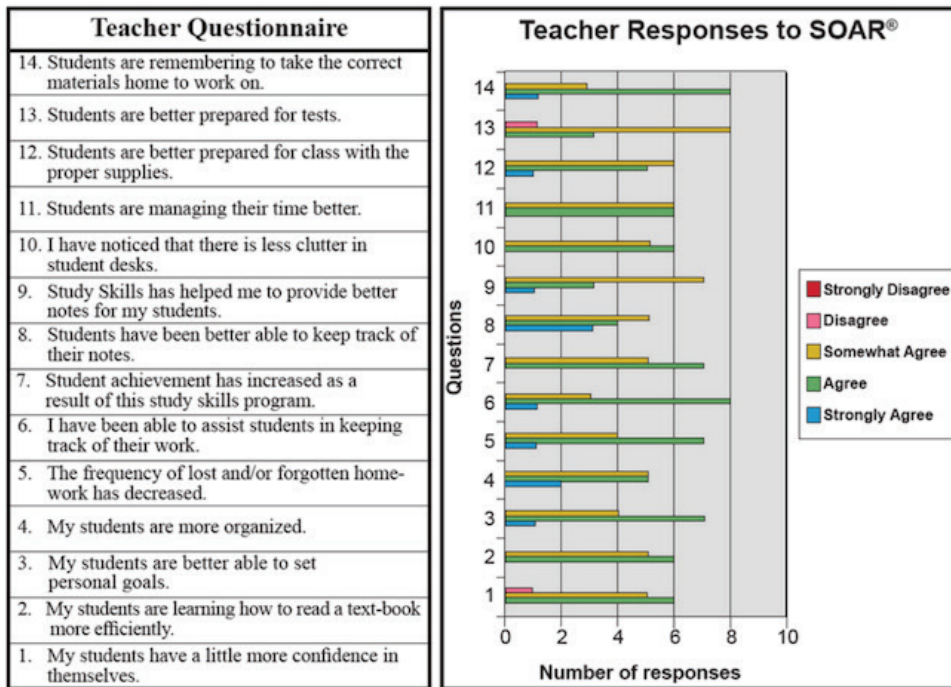
## SOAR® Study Skills Teacher Survey

Woodward Academy, Detroit, MI, Fall 2007

### Teacher's Declare SOAR® 98% Effective!

Teachers at Woodward Academy, a middle school in the heart of Detroit, MI, were asked to complete the survey on the left-hand side (below) regarding the effectiveness of the SOAR® System. Teachers attended a one-day workshop on the system at the beginning of the year and completed this survey two months later.\*

\*This survey was created, distributed and compiled by the Woodward Academy administration team and was NOT solicited by SOAR®.



In an independent, unsponsored survey, teachers praised SOAR for its practicality, ease of use, and effectiveness in building study and organizational skills. They noted its positive impact on student confidence and success.

SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills Curriculum has shown impressive results in student achievement and satisfaction across various schools. For instance, one school reported an **increase in students' GPAs by an average of one full point** across the entire student body, while teachers from another program report SOAR to be **98% effective in addressing common student challenges** in organization and learning. Educators, like those at Woodward Academy, emphasized the practical impact of SOAR on real academic performance. **A teacher remarked, "This program truly transforms students' ability to succeed independently."** For a deeper dive, visit [StudySkills.com/results](http://StudySkills.com/results).

## Are Results Guaranteed?

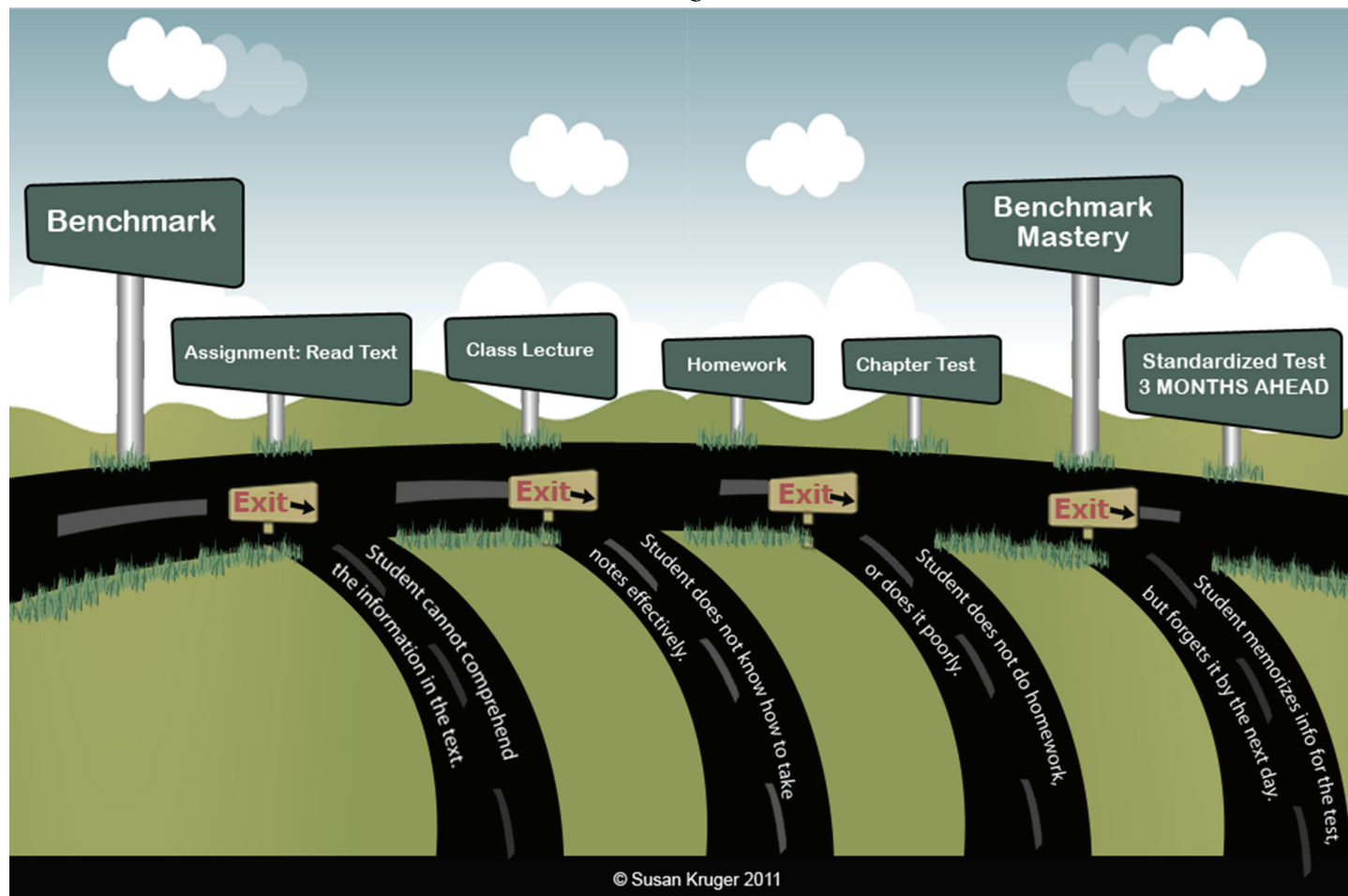
The SOAR® Curriculum Guarantee promises the following, measurable improvements for students *when implemented as directed*:

- Average +0.5 GPA increase,
- 20% boost in student confidence (as measured by the pre/post assessment) and a
- 30% reduction in missing assignments.

If these benchmarks are not met, schools are eligible for a full refund. See [StudySkills.com/guarantee](http://StudySkills.com/guarantee) for more details.



# Two Research-Based Ways to Raise Test Scores



SOAR® improves learning and test performance by teaching simple, metacognitive strategies that prevent common “off-ramps” to learning.

Standardized tests hold us accountable for student performance, but teaching to the test isn’t the answer. Research shows that focusing on sound instructional practices not only enhances the learning experience for students and teachers but also leads to better test outcomes. Two key factors drive success in all dimensions:

1. **Build “cognitive flexibility” with metacognitive strategies.**<sup>1</sup> If students don’t have problem-solving strategies for learning content, well ... they won’t learn it! *Obviously.*
2. **Teach the curriculum, not “to the test.”** Teaching “to the test”—also known as “item teaching”—actually lowers test scores by promoting narrow, rigid thinking.<sup>2,3</sup> And, it’s directly opposed to item #1. Instead, students get better results when instruction is focused on the content represented on the test. This body of knowledge is typically known as your content standards.

*SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills* teaches metacognitive strategies in the context of *efficient* executive function skills that support and enhance student learning. While doing so, SOAR also “teaches the curriculum,” as it covers 100% of the national anchor standards, all of the non-literature ELA standards, all of the ACT WorkKeys standards, and more!

## Additional Research-Validated Strategies to Raise Test Scores Include:

**Promote “asking questions.”** The National Research Council concludes that asking questions is the key for effective problem-solving.<sup>3</sup> The “A” in SOAR® stands for “**Ask Questions;**” all metacognitive strategies in SOAR use this process as the core approach to learning new information.

**Promote goal-setting and monitoring.**<sup>4,5</sup> The “S” in SOAR® stands for “Set goals.” Students will learn a simple, yet comprehensive, approach of thinking forward to create goals. SOAR® concludes with an “R” for “Record your progress,” where students learn to monitor their goals.

**Cultivate student reflection.**<sup>6,7,8</sup> SOAR® is built on the principle that metacognitive growth occurs through reflection. Strategies are designed to be student-friendly and encourage self-reflection.

Three of the program’s five sections focus on reflection:

- Section 1: How Are You Smart?
- Section 2: Set Goals
- Section 5: Record Progress

Even Section 4: Ask Questions incorporates reflection as students develop meaningful inquiries.

Every lesson begins with reflection questions addressing common student challenges and ends with questions reviewing solutions learned. These prompts connect new content to prior knowledge, reinforce relevance, and support long-term retention—making reflection a natural part of SOAR®’s culture.

**Encourage self-evaluation.**<sup>4,9,10</sup> SOAR® emphasizes self-evaluation through portfolio development and the Exit Presentation.

- After each lesson, students complete a **Skill Demonstration Form** to reflect on what they learned, provide evidence, and connect it to future life skills.
- Over 18 lessons, these forms and evidence build a **portfolio** showcasing deep understanding.
- The course concludes with an **Exit Presentation**, where students share one key piece of evidence from each section, reflecting on its current relevance and future potential.

These activities not only promote self-evaluation but also harness the power of positive peer influence, as students gain valuable insights from their peers’ presentations. While optional, these assessments have a profound impact when included.

**Learn from mistakes.**<sup>11,12</sup> Mistakes are the greatest short-cut to learning because they provide powerful *feedback*. SOAR® teaches students to capitalize on mistakes in two key ways:

1. **Reading textbooks/nonfiction:** Students are encouraged to make educated guesses about the relevance of visuals and text features *before* reading. This process connects prior knowledge and creates learning opportunities—correct guesses reinforce understanding, while mistakes strengthen it even more.
2. **Test review:** In the chapter *How to Take Tests*, the 80/20 Power Strategy emphasizes reviewing graded tests. While this doesn't change the current score, it corrects misunderstandings and significantly improves future performance.

**Teach how to take tests:** Treat “tests” as another genre of literacy. Some educators object to this, saying students must learn the content!

While genuine learning is the primary goal, students' content knowledge may not be accurately reflected if they are confused by test formats or strategies. To address this, the *How to Take Tests* chapter provides practical tips for navigating a wide variety of test types.

#### **WARNING!**

Metacognitive strategies are ineffective if students don't know *how* or *when* to use them. This is a common issue with most metacognitive instruction: skills are taught for isolated situations, leaving students unsure of *when* to apply them, or overwhelmed by too many strategies to remember *how* to do them!

SOAR® addresses this by focusing on one core strategy: making connections by “asking questions.” This simplified approach empowers students to apply metacognitive strategies across a wide range of situations, including high-stakes tests.

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# Curriculum Evaluation/Comparison Chart

The chart below allows you to compare SOAR® to other programs. While we acknowledge it is inherently biased towards SOAR, it provides detailed insights into the program’s content and the author’s careful design. With this insight, you can make your own, informed judgment.

Evaluation Criteria	SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills	Curriculum #2
<p><b>1. Who is the program designed for ...</b></p> <p><b>What age/ education levels does it target?</b></p> <p><b>What types of programs is the curriculum designed to serve?</b></p>	<p><b>Learning skills remain consistent across grade levels</b>, allowing SOAR to flexibly address diverse academic and developmental needs:</p> <p><b>Age/education levels:</b> Grades 6–12, adaptable for upper elementary (5th) and post-secondary.</p> <p><b>Supports:</b> Executive function goals for IEP/504 plans.</p> <p><b>Programs served:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General education</li> <li>• Special education</li> <li>• At-risk programs</li> <li>• Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention</li> <li>• “Freshman seminars” and similar orientation courses</li> <li>• College prep and career readiness programs</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. What skills are covered?</b></p>	<p><b>Executive function:</b> Time management, organization, prioritization, and independent problem-solving.</p> <p><b>Self-management:</b> Goal setting, managing stress, and tracking progress.</p> <p><b>Organization:</b> Organizing papers, digital files, physical spaces, and schedules.</p> <p><b>Learning strategies:</b> Reading nonfiction, note-taking, studying, and test-taking.</p> <p><b>Communication skills:</b> Effective speaking, listening, and collaboration with teachers and peers.</p> <p><b>Writing skills:</b> Paragraph and essay writing, grammar, and presentation delivery.</p>	
<p><b>3. What outcomes can we expect?</b></p>	<p><b>Improved grades:</b> Proven to raise school-wide average GPAs by one full point.</p> <p><b>Fewer missing assignments:</b> Rates often drop to nearly zero in adopting schools.</p> <p><b>Enhanced executive function:</b> Better time management, organization, and independence.</p> <p><b>Student independence:</b> Strategies students can apply without teacher support.</p> <p><b>Intrinsic motivation:</b> Engaging, student-friendly strategies.</p> <p><b>Transferable skills:</b> Applicable across subjects and into future contexts.</p>	

## Curriculum Evaluation/Comparison Chart

Evaluation Criteria	SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills	Curriculum #2
<p>4. Does the curriculum promote intrinsic motivation and foster independent executive function? Do the strategies apply across content areas, and will students know when to use them?</p>	<p><b>Intrinsic motivation:</b> The curriculum engages students with SOAR's three student-friendly criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast and efficient</li> <li>• Exceptionally effective</li> <li>• Broadly applicable across content areas</li> </ul> <p><b>Independent executive function:</b> By optimizing efficiency, students quickly become independent with skills like time management, organization, and prioritization.</p> <p><b>Cross-content applicability:</b> Ensures students know how/when to use each strategy.</p>	
<p>5. How much time is needed to cover the program, and how flexible is it? Can lessons be adapted to fit our schedule or taught out of order as needed?</p>	<p><b>Time required:</b> The <i>Pacing Guide</i> illustrates a wide range of options ranging across: full-year schedules, a few sessions, 1–1 pull-out programs, and more.</p> <p><b>Flexibility:</b> Adaptable to 1–5 days/week, semester or year-long formats, or taught out of order as needed.</p> <p><b>Sequential or stand-alone:</b> Lessons build progressively but also stand alone to target specific needs.</p>	
<p>6. Is the curriculum available in multiple formats? What are its technology requirements?</p>	<p><b>Formats:</b> Available in print (workbooks) and digital (software app) with online teacher resources.</p> <p><b>Technology:</b> Requires internet and a device; supports Google single sign-on. Optional tools like projectors/interactive whiteboards can enhance instruction, but are not required.</p>	
<p>7. Do teachers need special training? How much prep time is required for each lesson?</p>	<p><b>Training:</b> No special training is needed; teachers can follow the provided guides and resources. However, when implementing with 3+ teachers, SOAR's 90-minute virtual training helps ensure a consistent start.</p> <p><b>Prep time:</b> SOAR is a turn-key solution with minimal prep required. The program includes: a detailed pacing guide, presentation slides, editable/printable Apply + Practice PDFs, concise materials, and clear instructions—all ready to use.</p>	
<p>8. Is the program a “list of tips” or is it a comprehensive, integrated approach to learning and organizing? (continued)</p>	<p><b>Comprehensive approach:</b> Strategies are built upon first principles of learning, building transferable skills. Rather than a disconnected list of tips, students see how strategies connect to enhance organization and long-term learning.</p> <p><b>Engagement:</b> (Continued on next page ...)</p>	

## Curriculum Evaluation/Comparison Chart

Evaluation Criteria	SOAR <sup>®</sup> Learning & Soft Skills	Curriculum #2
<p><b>8. (continued)</b>  <b>How does it engage students?</b></p>	<p><b>Engagement:</b> All materials designed to meet SOAR's three-point student-friendly criteria. The program includes: interactive lessons, real-world applications, and activities tied to personal goals, boosting intrinsic motivation. Lessons activate prior knowledge to reinforce relevance and answer students' ever-present question, "When will I use this?"</p> <p>Finally, students enjoy learning about themselves and are fascinated by <b>The Brain Circuit™</b>, a model that shows how learning happens in their brain. Each lesson ends with an explanation of how the strategy works in the brain, helping students understand why it is effective.</p>	
<p><b>9. Does the program support differentiated instruction and special populations, including students with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ADHD</b></li> <li>• <b>learning disabilities</b></li> <li>• <b>executive function challenges, or</b></li> <li>• <b>those living in two homes?</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Differentiated instruction:</b> SOAR is designed with strategic use of visuals and captions to support comprehension and provides audio narration, guidelines for adjusting mastery levels ("exposure, practice, independence") for each strategy, and flexible rubrics to meet diverse needs and mastery levels.</p> <p><b>Special populations:</b> SOAR provides students with videos illustrating the brain biology of ADHD, LD, and autism, helping students understand the brain biology of their challenges, empowering them to create effective detours. Ultimately, all strategies are designed to be as effective as possible, ensuring they are optimized for students with ADHD, LD, autism, and other executive function challenges.</p>	
<p><b>10. Are a variety of summative and formative assessments provided?</b></p>	<p>SOAR includes a range of summative and formative assessments to measure knowledge, application, and progress:</p> <p><b>Formative:</b> Apply + Practice activities, multiple-choice quizzes, anecdotal observations, and Skill Demonstration Forms.</p> <p><b>Summative:</b> Pre/Post-Scorecard, final exam, portfolio, and Exit Presentation.</p> <p>These assessments are designed to track both content mastery and the practical application of strategies.</p>	

## Curriculum Evaluation/Comparison Chart

Evaluation Criteria	SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills	Curriculum #2
<p><b>11. Is the program aligned with educational standards and does it meet mandated curriculum requirements?</b></p>	<p>SOAR® covers all:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Common Core Anchor Standards</b></li> <li>• <b>Non-literature ELA standards*</b></li> <li>• <b>WorkKeys standards</b></li> </ul> <p>SOAR aligns with additional standards, such as <b>CPALMS (Florida)</b> and <b>TEKS (Texas)</b>, with detailed correlations available on our website.</p> <p>* With the addition of our Fiction Story Map module, SOAR covers <b>100% of all ELA standards.</b></p>	
<p><b>12. Is the program research-based?</b></p>	<p>SOAR is built on common sense and a LOT of research, drawing from extensive studies on <b>brain-based learning</b> and <b>educational best practices.</b></p> <p>It incorporated principles from <b>multiple intelligences, executive function, and self-regulated learning</b> to enhance student outcomes.</p> <p><b>See our extensive bibliography at <a href="http://StudySkills.com/educators/research-basis">StudySkills.com/educators/research-basis</a>.</b></p>	
<p><b>13. Does the program come with a guarantee?</b></p>	<p>Yes, the SOAR® program offers a 100% money-back guarantee. If implemented with fidelity, the program guarantees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPA increase: At least a 0.5 point rise.</li> <li>• Improved confidence: 20% boost on the pre/post Study Skills Scorecard.</li> <li>• Fewer missing assignments: 30% reduction.</li> </ul> <p>To qualify, schools must sign the agreement within 45 days of purchase and provide evidence of program fidelity.</p>	
<p><b>14. What is the cost of the program, and are additional supplies required? If so, are they budget-friendly?</b></p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> Pricing varies by materials and student numbers. Details are available on the SOAR® product information page. Email <a href="mailto:info@studyskills.com">info@studyskills.com</a> to request a customized quote.(Please provide your best guesstimate of number of teachers and number of students.)</p> <p><b>Supplies:</b> Minimal, budget-friendly supplies include a one 1.5-inch binder, poly folders, file folders, envelopes, and index cards—typically within existing school budgets.</p>	

More from SOAR ...

# SOAR® Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Building the Best Version of YOU

SOAR SEL helps students develop self-awareness, emotional regulation, decision-making, and relationship skills to thrive in school and life. SOAR SEL is fully aligned to CASEL and focuses on practical, research-based strategies for long-term success.

## Who Is It For?

Designed for students in grades 6–12 and beyond, SOAR SEL is universally applicable to learners of all ages who need strategies to manage emotions, strengthen relationships, and navigate challenges.

## What Does It Cover?

SOAR SEL is organized into lessons called “Floors” under the theme of “architecture”—building our best selves:

1. **Self-Awareness:** Who Am I? Emotions, growth mindset, and thoughts.
2. **Stress & Regulation:** Managing emotions, stress, and anxiety.
3. **Relationships:** Communication, teamwork, and handling challenges.
4. **Decision-Making:** Responsible choices and values-based actions.
5. **Real-World Skills:** Responsibility and resilience.

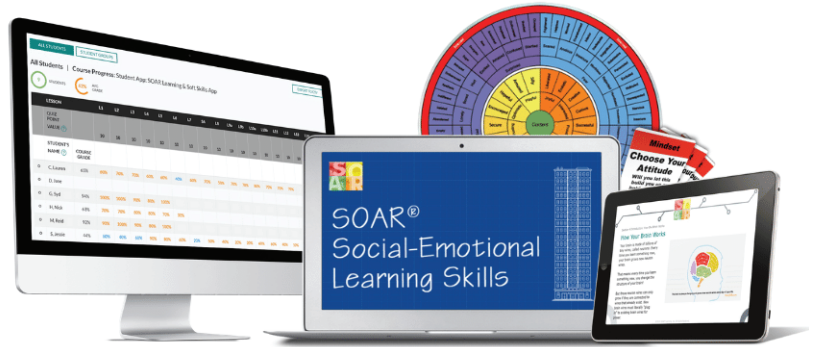
Each lesson concludes with “Making the Invisible, Visible,” highlighting concrete ways to make SEL issues visible and manageable.

## How Does It Work?

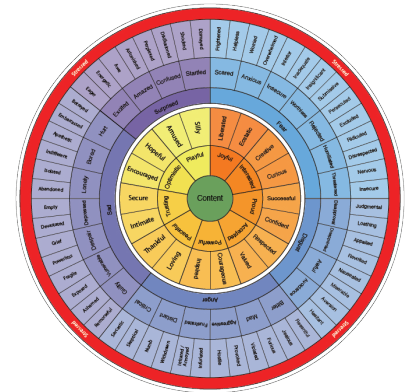
- **Formats:** Software app or workbook.
- **Teacher Tools:** Multi-Media Teacher’s Guide for visuals, notes, and guidance.
- **Student Tools:** Reproducible/reusable tools for students to use in a variety of situations.
- **Flexible Delivery:** Student-led or teacher-led instruction.

## Tech Requirements?

Internet connectivity for the software. Accessible on any computer or mobile device.



SOAR SEL develops self-awareness, emotional regulation, relationships, and decision-making for grades 6–12+. Aligned with CASEL, it offers practical tools and flexible formats.



SOAR SEL makes managing emotions and relationships tangible with tools like the SOAR Feelings Wheel and Coping Cards.

# Multi-Year Implementation



\*Above, one of many multi-year options. All multi-year options are customized to meet school/district's specific objectives.

Looking for a program to develop essential soft skills over 2–4 years? SOAR's multi-year options empower students for success in school and life. Programs are tailored to meet each school or district's goals, with flexible schedules. Here's an example of what a multi-year plan could include:

## Year 1: *SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills* or SOAR as an ELA Credit

Students build a foundation with *SOAR Learning & Soft Skills*. With our literature module, this course can also serve as an ELA credit.

## Year 2: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Students focus on self-awareness, emotional regulation, teamwork, and decision-making through SOAR SEL.

## Years 3 and/or 4: SOAR Higher!

Students refine their skills with advanced modules, including organization, deeper ELA integration, real-world communication, "Genius Hour," or capstone projects.

SOAR equips students with life-ready skills to thrive academically, professionally, and personally. Contact [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) to consult with our curriculum specialists.

# Learning-by-Matrix



A flexible, standards-based curriculum for grades 6–12+, SOAR offers personalized learning with transcript-ready accountability. Ideal for schools, homeschools, and co-ops.

Standards. Matrices foster accountability with transcript-ready records that link to a comprehensive mastery portfolio, ideal for tracking progress and achievements.

Designed for collaboration, the SOAR Matrix encourages social learning in classrooms, homeschooling, or co-op groups. It combines customization with structure, offering a scalable solution for schools to personalize education and a flexible framework for homeschool families. For more information about implementing Learning-by-Matrix in your school, homeschool, or co-op, contact [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com).

SOAR's Learning-by-Matrix is a complete, standards-based curriculum for grades 6–12+ across all core subjects. Each SOAR Matrix lists required standards in student-friendly language, with three mastery tiers for differentiation. Students choose how to learn each standard and provide evidence to demonstrate mastery.

This flexible framework supports both schools and homeschooling families, allowing for personalized pathways while ensuring students meet curriculum

# Curriculum Consultations, Design, Training & Speaking

Susan Kruger Winter, M.Ed. is an internationally recognized curriculum consultant, designer, and speaker. As the author of the best-selling SOAR® programs, she empowers students worldwide with strategies for learning efficiency. Her frameworks, like **The Brain Circuit™** and **The ADHD Circuit™**, address diverse learning needs.

As CEO of SOAR® Learning, Inc., Susan has developed research-based curricula integrating study skills with SEL, used in 4,500+ schools across 51 countries. Honored as a “Global Expert in Education Innovation” by Microsoft, she creates accessible, student-centered solutions.

A dynamic speaker, Susan delivers engaging workshops and partners with schools to design custom curricula, inspired by her own journey as a former struggling learner.

Contact [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) to request a consult.

## Education Reform: A simple blueprint for human-friendly education

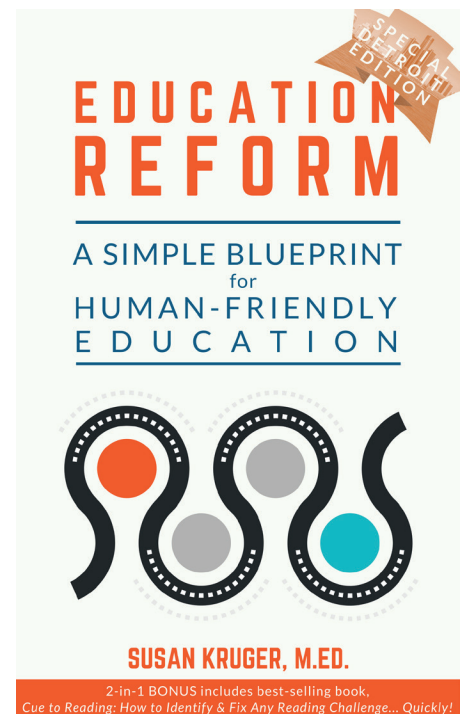
Written by Susan, *Education Reform: A Simple Blueprint for Human-Friendly Education* offers practical solutions to core challenges in U.S. education. Drawing on successful models like Finland’s system and the Montessori method, it emphasizes aligning practices with human development and brain biology.

The book addresses three key problems in U.S. education, introduces the Success Pyramid for effective learning, and explores instructional models for holistic education. It also tackles special education, offering strategies to prevent and address learning disabilities, and examines the impact of political systems on reform. Susan advocates for a system that prioritizes relevance, engagement, and student development.

Find the book on Amazon Kindle or contact [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) to order a copy.



Susan empowers students through SOAR® programs in 4,500+ schools across 51 countries, creating student-centered solutions inspired by her own journey.



Susan’s book tackles U.S. education challenges, focusing on human development, effective learning, and special education strategies.

Find it on Amazon Kindle or contact [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com).

# Next steps ...

## 1. See a Demo!

Explore a sample lesson in our student app, along with other valuable resources for teachers and students, at [StudySkills.com/demo](https://www.studyskills.com/demo). From this webpage, you can request a full-access, 14-day trial.

## 2. Request a Quote.

SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills pricing is flexible, based on your choice of:

- Software app licenses,
- Books, or a
- Combination of both.

Discounts are available for larger groups, and customized solutions can be tailored to fit your needs and budget. To request a quote or make a purchase, visit [StudySkills.com/Store](https://www.studyskills.com/Store).

## 3. Schedule an Ask 'n Learn.

If you have more questions, schedule an Ask 'n Learn session with a SOAR Consultant—no commissions, just personalized answers to your curriculum questions! Contact us at: [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) and ask for an Ask 'n Learn appointment. We will send you a calendar link.

If you have more questions, contact us at: [info@studyskills.com](mailto:info@studyskills.com) or call 800.390.SOAR.

If you are ready to make a purchase, visit [StudySkills.com/Store](https://www.studyskills.com/Store).