

SOAR

LEARNING &
SOFT SKILLS



EIGHT-STEP GETTING STARTED GUIDE

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WELCOME TO SOAR LEARNING & SOFT SKILLS!

Dear Fellow Educator,

In this guide, I share an eight-step process to help you quickly get started with SOAR. In the process, I also address the most frequently asked questions and some simple points that can become blockers... unless you are armed with a few, key insights.

I know, I know... nobody wants to read the "Introduction," "fine print," or "Getting Started Guide." 😊

I remember my days in the classroom; I always felt pressure to do *more* with *less* time. When I had new curriculum to learn-then-teach, I wanted to jump in! I certainly did not have much patience for reading a lot of text.

So, I have done my best to organize this information for easy reading and quick reference.

How to Read this Guide

This guide was carefully designed for you to read in "layers:"

- ✓ **Layer 1: The headings and visuals + captions** to get a quick orientation.
- ✓ **Layer 2: The sub-headings and bold text** quickly provide a deeper layer of detail.
- ✓ **Layer 3: The "regular" text** fills in all the details, when you are ready for them.

An investment of 40-60 minutes now, to review this document, will eliminate a lot of friction as you get oriented to this new curriculum.

Thank you for time in reviewing this guide... and THANK YOU for your commitment to teaching these life-long skills to students!

To your students' success,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan".

Susan Kruger Winter, M.Ed.



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STEP 1: EXPLORE THE INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS.



A. Determine what your school/district ordered for students: workbooks, app licenses (software), or both?

The student content is presented in two formats: workbook or app (software). Only one of these tools is required, but many schools order both, often using the software to introduce the content and the book for review/ongoing reference as students apply strategies.

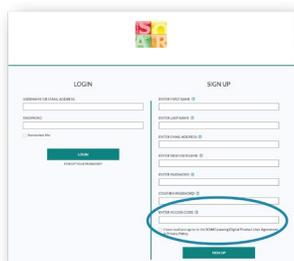
If your school ordered workbooks, track them down. They are often hiding in the school office or district receiving building.

If your school ordered software apps, see the next step.

B. Find your access code and log in to your teacher account.

Access codes are sent via email to the person named on the purchase order we received from your district. Record the codes below:

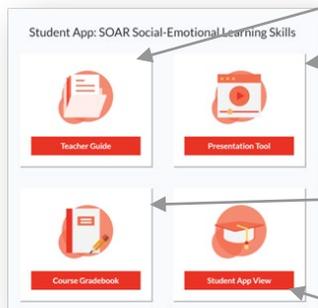
- **Teacher access code:** _____
- **Student access code:** _____
(for use in Step 7)



Go to www.soarlearning.com and enter your access code.

Go to www.soarlearning.com and complete the column on the right-hand side of the screen. The access code is *only* needed for the *first* login.

All instructional resources are in the teacher's software. When you login, you will see four sections:

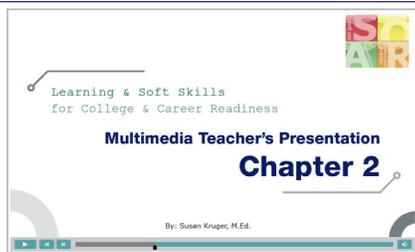


After you login, you will see four sections on the Teacher Dashboard.

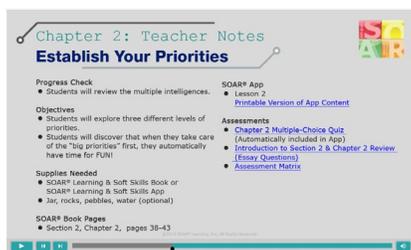
- **Teacher Guide:** This section includes training videos, recommended supplies, [pacing guide](#), assessments, and more.
- **Presentation Tool:** This tool provides done-for-you slides to use for direct instruction and/or review sessions. An “instructional script” can be found in the *Notes* of the Presentation Tool. All assessments and Optional Activities are organized, by lesson, in the Presentation Tool.
- **Gradebook:** Students’ pre/post-evaluations and quiz scores can be found in the gradebook. If you wish to reset a quiz attempt for a student, you can do this in the gradebook; simply right-click on the quiz grade you wish to reset and follow the prompts.
- **Student App:** This link allows you to view the student software, exactly as the students see it... with ONE exception; when students first log in, students will be required to take the *Study Skills Scorecard* before they can access any lessons. (If the Scorecard were included in your Teacher Account, you would have click through all 50 questions EVERY TIME you opened this preview.)

continued...

(CONTINUED) STEP 1: EXPLORE THE INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS.



To access the Presentation Tool, log in to your Teacher's Account; from the Dashboard, click "Presentation Tool."



Assessments for each lesson can be found in the first 2-3 slides of the Presentation Tool.



Optional Activities can be found in the Presentation Tool (first 3-4 slides) or in the Student App (last slide).

C. Find the additional instructional resources.

The core content is presented in the student workbook or app. Additional, optional, instructional resources can be found in the Presentation Tool.

In the Presentation Tool (*Teacher Account > Dashboard > Presentation Tool*), you will find three resources:

- **Assessments** for each lesson.
- **Optional Activities**, including:
 - Writing prompts
 - "Turn-n-Talk" prompts, and
 - Additional multimedia resources and activities that dig deeper into the skills covered in the app/workbook.
- **Done-for-you presentation slides** teachers can use to guide direct instruction or a review discussion.

STEP 2: SECURE ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES, IF POSSIBLE.

There are a handful of additional school supplies that complement SOAR, as listed below:
(For direct links to recommended products on Amazon, log in to your teacher account and follow this path:
Dashboard > Teacher Guide > Getting Started: Supplies & Pacing.)



The SOAR Binder transforms students' 12-18 different folders and notebooks into one, streamlined system!

A. The SOAR Binder

The SOAR Binder is often a cornerstone to the whole program. Binder supplies are inexpensive and *replace* traditional folders and notebooks, so they can often be substituted in existing budgets.

Supplies needed:

- **A single, 1-1.5-inch binder, per student.** (Use 1.5-inch binders when students may need to put a pencil pouch in their binder.) Binders should meet the following criteria:
 - **Heavy duty!** Students will carry this binder everywhere, all the time! Look for descriptors like “sturdy,” “heavy duty,” or “extra heavy duty.”
 - **Clear-view cover.** This allows students to personalize their binder, which helps them identify their binder from all of the other, identical binders.
 - **Interior pockets.** Pockets on the inside covers is a must!
- **Plastic binder pockets.** Only one pocket/folder is necessary.
- **Labels with permanent adhesive.** Labels are used to label each folder.
- **Looseleaf notebook paper.** The notebook paper will replace the paper from spiral notebooks.
- **Pencil pouch (optional).** A pencil pouch is helpful if students are not allowed to carry bags in school.

Recommended supplies include:



(CONTINUED) STEP 2: SECURE ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES, IF POSSIBLE.



Most academic planners will work if they include a weekly layout.

If providing a paper planner is not an option, SOAR provides a reproducible weekly layout for students.

B. Paper Planner

For a variety of reasons, we strongly recommend the use of paper planners over digital planners. For optimal execution, we recommend the following items for each student:

- **Academic planner:** Most planners designed for school distribution have an appropriate, weekly layout.
- **Binder clip:** To use as a page-marker. (Do NOT use paper clips; they slide off in the bookbag.)
- **Slim pen/pencil** to slide into the spiral of the planner.

If providing a planner is out of the budget, SOAR does include a [reproducible weekly layout](#) that can be distributed to students.



The 3-D Writing Organizer is used in Lessons 13 & 14, “How to Write Papers” & “How to Give Presentations.”

C. 3-D Writing Organizer

The 3-D graphic organizer is used in two lessons: “How to Write Papers” and “How to Give Presentations.”

This tool requires the following supplies, per student:

- **1 standard file-folder**
- **2-4 #10 envelopes**
- **Marker, glue, and scissors**
- **Stack of index cards**

End of Step 2.

STEP 3: DEFINE YOUR EXPECTATIONS & DESIRED OUTCOMES.

Being clear about your expectations and desired outcomes will guide every decision you make as you plan lessons and teach with the curriculum.

SOAR's Objectives

The *SOAR Learning & Soft Skills* curriculum is designed to meet three, foundational objectives:



1. **Students become more independent.** All skills in SOAR are designed to be student-led, to facilitate 100% student independence. Many things labeled as “study skills” or “study tools” do NOT promote student independence.

For example, graphic organizers are an excellent “study tool,” but students must rely on *teachers* to determine the best organizer for any given topic. On the contrary, all skills/strategies taught in SOAR are universal and easy to learn, allowing students to use them independently.



2. **Students learn to value “strategy” for learning.** Students instinctively understand the concept of “strategy” in things like sports and video games. But our society is generally blind to the use of strategy in learning. SOAR is a “playbook” for strategic learning.



3. **Students learn “career-ready” skills.** Countless employer surveys consistently conclude that their most in-demand skills are things like the ability to: learn new skills and information, comprehend written information, write clearly, communicate effectively, manage time, meet deadlines... and more. The skills taught in SOAR will serve students for life!

Knowledge vs Application

Unlike many other subjects, students can apply the content of this curriculum to their life, immediately!

Therefore, it is especially important to be aware of the distinction between content *knowledge* and the *application* of that knowledge.

For example, SOAR's multiple-choice quizzes measure students' *knowledge* of the content that is introduced in the software and/or workbook. When time is tight, you might only have time to assess *knowledge* of the basic content. That is ok; ANY exposure to these skills is very beneficial for students!

However, the more instructional time available, the more you can focus on *coaching* students through the *application* of that knowledge as they apply strategies to their current schoolwork and life. The additional, optional activities and assessments will support students' application of what they have learned.

The more you are aware of this distinction, the clearer you will be on many things: what to cover/not cover, how/where to gauge your expectations (especially in relation to the amount of instructional time you have), what instructional resources and assessments to use, how to set up your gradebook, and more.

Age-Appropriate Expectations: Exposure, Practice, & Independence

The content in SOAR Learning & Soft Skills is appropriate for students as young as 4th-5th grade, all the way through graduate school! However, our expectations across age, grade, and ability-levels should differ.

See the chart on the next page for a skill-by-skill guide to age-appropriate expectations. The guide is merely a broad suggestion; every student and situation is unique. The chart simply illustrates that mastery of these skills is a progressive continuum.

Note that the *most advanced* skill in this curriculum is “notetaking.” Effective notetaking requires students to instantaneously: process information, assess its value to determine what should be written down, then synthesize the information into fewer words for writing... all while continuing to listen for more information. Yes, the curriculum includes strategies to promote a faster path to independent notetaking, but we should not *expect* mastery at the “independence” level until the end of 11th grade, at the earliest.



(continued) Step 3: Define Your Expectations & Desired Outcomes

Age-Appropriate Expectations: Study Skills Across Grade-Levels

The following continuum outlines general guidelines regarding the age-appropriateness for each of the SOAR® skills. Use the following key to interpret the continuum:

E = EXPOSURE – By the end of this grade-level, the goal should be for students to simply have exposure to this skill as preparation for guided practice and independence in following years.

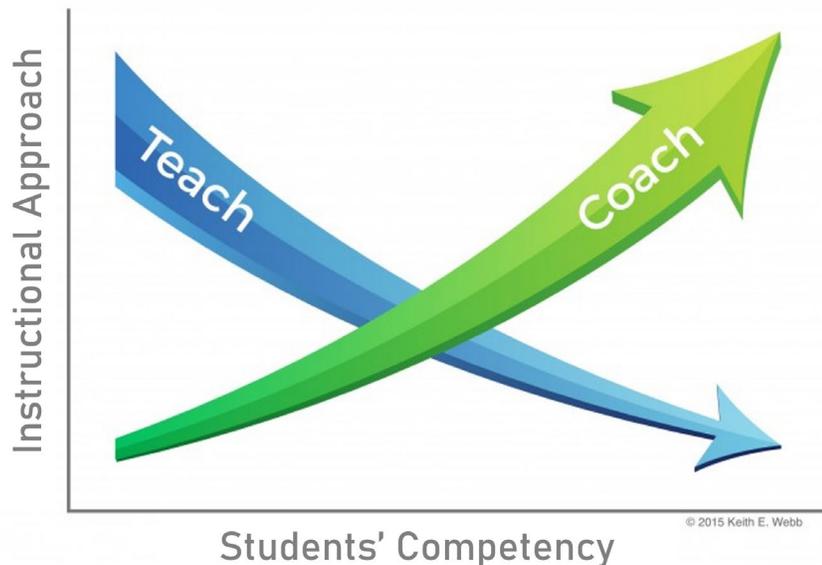
P = PRACTICE – By the end of this grade-level, the goal should be for students to have guided practice using these skills.

I = INDEPENDENCE – By the end of this grade-level, most students should be able to execute these skills independently.

SKILL	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
How are you smart? Multiple Intelligences	E	E	P	P	I	I	I	I	I
Set goals Time management: Priorities	E	E	P	P	I	I	I	I	I
Set goals Time-management: Setting Goals	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I
Set goals Time-management: Using a Planner	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I
Organize School Papers	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
Organize Space (bookbag, locker, room)	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I
Organize Time	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I
Ask questions Speaking & Listening Effectively	E	E	P	P	P	I	I	I	I
Ask questions Working with Teachers & Peers	E	E	P	P	P	I	I	I	I
Ask questions Reading Textbooks & Nonfiction	E	E	P	I	I	I	I	I	I
Ask questions Taking & Studying Notes	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	I	I
Ask questions Taking Tests	E	E	P	P	I	I	I	I	I
Ask questions Writing Papers	P	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I
Ask questions Giving Presentations	P	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I
Record your progress Tracking your grades	E	E	P	I	I	I	I	I	I
Record your progress Monitoring goals (long-term)	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I
Record your progress Recognizing your achievements	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I

STEP 4: DETERMINE YOUR ROLE: TEACHER, COACH, OR BOTH?

As Your Students Grow, Your Role Changes: Teacher vs Coach



As students' learning evolves from "knowledge" to "application," your role will shift, too. Initially, as you share these strategies with students and facilitate discussions about how to implement them, your role will be that of "teacher."

However, your role will shift to that of a "coach," as students begin applying the content from SOAR to their schoolwork in other classes. This shift is never linear; you will often feel like you are playing a game of hopscotch as you alternate back-and-forth between "teacher mode" and "coach mode."

This is not a revolutionary concept; it is the natural rhythm of optimal instruction and likely what you envisioned when you chose the vocation of teaching. It is simply helpful to be aware that the content in this curriculum is especially sensitive to this rhythm; the more time and space you can allow for students to engage in the trial-and-error process of *applying* these strategies, the faster they will benefit from their new learning and the more successful they will be!

However, if your schedule does not allow much time for practice/application, don't fret! Your students will still gain GREAT benefits simply from exposure to these skills. At the very least, they will learn that strategy has a place in learning, which is the most critical concept for students to gain from this curriculum.

STEP 5: DETERMINE YOUR APPROACH, “TRADITIONAL” OR “FLIPPED” INSTRUCTION?

SOAR Learning & Soft Skills is flexibly designed to accommodate “traditional” or “flipped” instruction:

Traditional Instruction



In this model, the students' *first exposure* to the content is delivered from the teacher, via lecture or class discussion. *After* the teacher-led introduction, students review what they learned by completing the software or reading the workbook.

Flipped Instruction



NOTE: Flipped instruction can be done at home OR at school! This model is about the students' *first exposure* to the content being an independent process -completed at each student's own pace- via either the software or workbook. *After* the students have reviewed the material independently, they review the content via class discussion, led by the teacher.

We Recommend Flipped Instruction

We recommend the flipped model because it's the most:



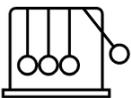
Brain-friendly. Flipped instruction allows students to learn “in layers,” which is how humans learn most optimally. When students listen to a lecture cold (with no prior exposure to the content), they miss 80% of the details that teachers work so hard to cover! Conversely, when students have an opportunity to warm-up to the new content at their own pace, their listening comprehension *dramatically* improves!



Aligned to the strategies in SOAR. This layered approach to learning is consistently taught and reinforced in a variety of ways throughout the curriculum.



Time-efficient. In school, this independent work makes optimal use of transition times, when students are often left waiting for everybody else; they wait while all the other students file in to class, sit down, and get settled with their supplies. They wait while the teacher takes attendance and deals with other, unforeseen issues that inevitably arise during this time.



Energy efficient. Allowing students to first engage with the content at their own pace removes a lot of friction commonly experienced with learning. Instead of both teachers and students feeling like they are pushing a boulder up-hill, the flipped model flips the flow of energy; it makes use of momentum from the extrinsic forces of prior exposure/experience, eliminating much resistance.

Kind to teachers. There are so many ways that a flipped model serves teachers:



- **Lesson planning is easier, especially in the beginning.** Teachers don't have to reach “expert status” prior to lessons. Yes, they should prepare and be familiar with the content, but a flipped model provides some space for teachers to learn along with the students. Of course, the teacher also brings additional life-experience and analytical thinking to the follow-up discussions.
- **The pace of a school day is more relaxed.** When students can get started on meaningful work as soon as they enter a classroom *-without* having to wait for the teacher- the teacher doesn't feel rushed and pressured to start class. Instead, there is some extra breathing room for handling the inevitable demands that come up at these times.
- **Teachers feel more effective.** There is a common misconception that flipped instruction is “replacing” the teacher; that could NOT be further from the truth! Flipped instruction simply allows teachers to make better use of their time. While students work independently for the first part of the class, teachers not only have time to handle administrative details, they have space to make 1-1 connections with students who need extra support.



(continued) Step 5: Determine Your Approach, “Traditional” or “Flipped” Instruction?

“What If I Don’t Have Time to Flip Instruction?” Or, “What If I’m Not Comfortable with This Model?”

If your time is severely constrained, you may not have time to flip instruction...and that is *okay*! Remember, *any* exposure to this content is serving students far better than *no* exposure to this content! You can only do what time allows you to do.

If you are not comfortable with this model, we encourage you to *try* it. Simply be honest with your students and tell them that you would like to experiment with different ways to teach the class. Then, try both models and collect students’ feedback. Students of all ages make surprisingly effective observations about their own learning and are surprisingly articulate... when asked to share them!

Connection vs Control

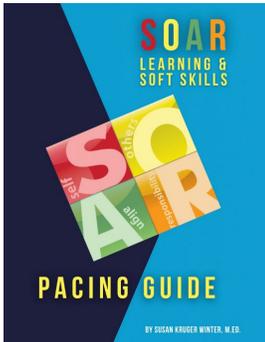
To be successful with flipped instruction, a teacher must be comfortable:

NOT being the “sole source of information” in a classroom. Whether we like it or not, mobile devices have permanently shifted the model of “teacher as the sole source of information.” While this may make some teachers feel uneasy, it creates space for teachers to *connect* with students more effectively because they are...

NOT running every moment of a class! Flipped instruction allows teachers to shift from “being in control” to “effectively connecting with students.” The teacher still provides a moderately “controlled” environment, but both students and teachers have a little more space to go at their own pace.

STEP 6: PACE & PLAN YOUR LESSONS.

How to Pace Instruction



The Pacing Guide

See our [Pacing Guide](#) for suggestions and examples on how to pace the curriculum. The Pacing Guide includes sample lessons for 1-5 days/week, over: full-year, semester, and less than a semester.

To find the Pacing Guide, log in to your Teacher Account:
Dashboard > Teacher Guide > Getting Started: Supplies & Pacing

To meet an extensive variety of scheduling needs, the curriculum materials are split into “Core Content” and “Additional Instructional Resources”...

Core Content

The core instruction and strategies of the program are delivered via:



The core content is delivered in both the software and/or workbook.



Software app: The software provides direct instruction of skills with interactive activities that provide immediate feedback. It can be used for both teacher-led or student-led instruction.

-and/or-

Workbook: The workbook also provides direct instruction of skills. The content is not as dynamic and interactive as it is in the software. However, the workbook provides “quicker access” to the content.

Many schools purchase both the software and workbook for students. In these instances, students usually complete the software, first. After a class discussion led by the teacher, they then review the content in the book to reinforce new learning and strengthen reading skills. The workbook is also used for reference as students apply strategies to their schoolwork.

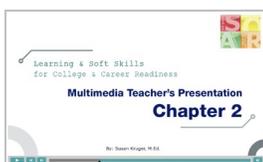
Additional Instructional Resources.

As noted in Step 1, **all additional Instructional Resources can be found in the Presentation Tool** (*Teacher Account > Dashboard > Presentation Tool*). Here, you will find three resources:



Several additional resources can be found in your Teacher Account.

- **Assessments** for each lesson.
- **Optional Activities**, including:
 - Writing prompts
 - “Turn-n-Talk” prompts, and
 - Additional multimedia resources and activities that dig deeper into the skills covered in the app/workbook.
- **Done-for-you presentation slides** teachers can use to guide direct instruction or a review discussion.



“Guided “study hall”/application of strategies: This line-item is not “an additional resource,” but it is here to remind you that allowing time for students to practice applying the strategies they’ve learned to their present schoolwork is a very acceptable (and strongly recommended) way to make use of instructional time.

Once again, the [Pacing Guide](#) provides examples of how to assimilate all resources, depending on your schedule and available instructional time.

(continued) Step 6: Pace & Plan Your Lessons

How to Plan Instruction

If we have done our job correctly, your planning process should be rather straightforward!

At this point, we are assuming you've followed the previous steps in this guide and have:

- ✓ Access to all instructional materials,
- ✓ Collected additional supplies (as available), and
- ✓ Are clear on your general *pacing* of lessons.

Learn the Strategies

Now it is time to learn the content! You can do that by:

- **Reading chapters in the book.** If you have a copy of the workbook available, you may find this the "fastest" way to learn the strategies in the curriculum.
- OR-
- **Completing lessons in the software.** The software is the most comprehensive and dynamic presentation of the information. The software also includes interactions to support your learning and retention, as you go. Lessons take adults an average of 20-30 minutes to complete, each.



Explore Additional Instructional Tools

Next, you can explore some of the additional instructional tools. Your objectives and the amount of time you have available for instruction will help you determine which tools to use.

You can find all additional resources for each lesson in the **Presentation Tool** (*Teacher Account > Dashboard > Presentation Tool*). The first 2-3 slides in the Presentation Tool, pictured below, include links to all assessments and additional activities available for extending instruction and practice.

Chapter 2: Teacher Notes
Establish Your Priorities

Progress Check

- Students will review the multiple intelligences.

Objectives

- Students will explore three different levels of priorities.
- Students will discover that when they take care of the "big priorities" first, they automatically have time for FUN!

Supplies Needed

- SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills Book or SOAR® Learning & Soft Skills App
- Jar, rocks, pebbles, water (optional)

SOAR® Book Pages

- Section 2, Chapter 2, pages 38-43

SOAR® App

- Lesson 2
- [Printable Version of App Content](#)

Assessments

- [Chapter 2 Multiple-Choice Quiz](#) (Automatically included in App)
- [Introduction to Section 2 & Chapter 2 Review \(Essay Questions\)](#)
- [Assessment Matrix](#)

Chapter 2
Optional Activities

The activities listed on this screen are *optional*. They are provided for when you wish to dig deeper into the topics addressed in this chapter, as time allows and the needs of students may indicate. These resources are ideal to use when guiding small-group "coaching lessons," or as a "second pass" through this curriculum (often second semester of a full-year program or a second year "review course" for students).

Multimedia Resources

- [Process for Making Wishes Come True](#)
- [Zig Ziglar](#)

Discussion Prompts

- Turn & Talk: [Chapter 2](#)

Writing Reflection

- Writing Reflection: [Chapter 2](#)

Additional Reading Material

- Article: ["I Don't Have Time for Homework"](#)

Activities

- Reproducible: [How Do You Spend Your Time Worksheet](#)
- Reproducible: [What Are Your Priorities Worksheet](#)
- Reproducible: [Setting Goals Maze](#)
- Activity: [Skill Demonstration Form](#)

Related Resources

- [Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens](#), by Sean Covey

At the beginning of every lesson in the Presentation Tool, you will find:
L: All assessments for the lesson.
R: All optional activities for the lesson.

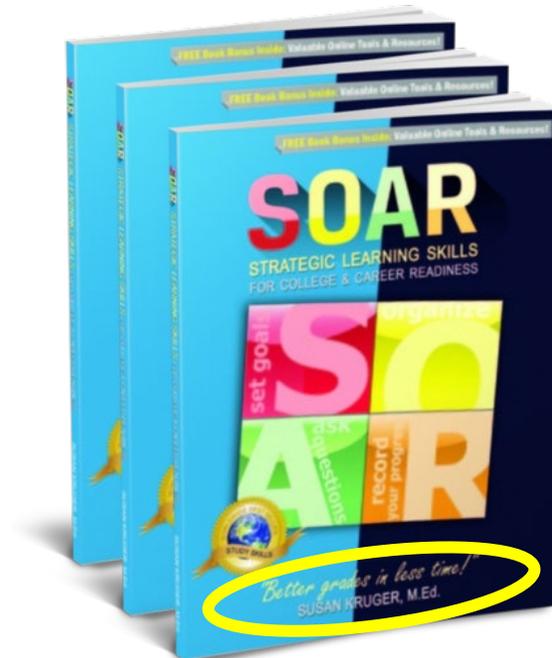
End of Step 6.

STEP 7: TEACH OR COACH. OR, BOTH.

Now, it is time to work with students. This program is here to guide you, but you are the one who brings it to life! As one curriculum trainer once said to a group of teachers, “Curriculum does not walk, talk, teach, or touch lives like *you* do!”

Obviously, we trust your professional judgement as you align this program to the needs of your students. It is in that spirit that we share some insights we’ve gleaned from 20+ years of teaching (mostly reluctant) students...

Tips for Inspiring Motivation



- ✓ **Emphasize that this course is truly about getting “better grades, in LESS time.”** Over the years, we’ve tested a variety of activities and messages; nothing resonates with students as consistently as *this* message! The most tried-and-true way to forge a positive connection from Day 1 is to introduce this course as a time-saver AND emphasize that you value time for “fun stuff!” This message is posted on the front cover of the workbook and delivered throughout the curriculum, but it is most powerful coming from their teacher!
- ✓ **Spend a lot of time on the first section, “HOW Are You Smart?”** In this chapter, students learn about the Multiple Intelligences and explore all their different types of intelligence. This chapter is designed to plant seeds of intrinsic motivation; students LOVE to learn about themselves, so this chapter is very powerful. Every minute spent discussing and exploring the Multiple Intelligences will pay “motivation dividends” as you progress through the course.

“Small hinges swing big doors.” Another benefit to this first chapter is that it builds a culture of peers and teachers seeking the *strengths* in each other! Society defaults to defining us by our weaknesses, but this slight little shift in perspective has been proven to transform the culture of classrooms and schools!
- ✓ **Finally, share stories.** You were once a student; you’ve walked in their shoes. As you feel comfortable, share some of your own experiences that relate to the topics covered in this program. Students LOVE to learn about their teachers *almost* as much as they love to learn about themselves. 😊



(continued) Step 7: Teach or Coach. Or, Both.

Suggestions for Day 1

The following few items are best addressed right away and in the following order:

1. **If your students are using the software, guide them to log in:**
 - a. Go to www.soarlearning.com.
 - b. In the right-hand column, they will enter their information.
 - c. In the last field, they will need an access code. You should have recorded this code in Step 1. All students will use the SAME access code.
2. **Assign the Scorecard *immediately***, before you say or do anything to artificially influence students' responses. (The Scorecard will also be taken at the end of the course and used to provide comparative data.) The Scorecard can be found in two places:
 - **In student apps**, the students will have no choice but to take the Scorecard before they can access any lessons.
 - **For students using only workbooks**, a printable Scorecard can be found at [this link](#), or in your Teacher Account: *Teacher Guide > Student Assessments > Student Scorecard*.
3. **Next, distribute planners and binder supplies.** Compile the folders, papers, and labels into the binders. You can provide a little bit of guidance on how to use the binder and planner, but you only need to provide a brief introduction. Students will benefit from some trial-and-error use of the materials until you get to the respective lessons in SOAR.
4. **Finally, for students using software, instruct students to connect to your account.** This is a simple process, illustrated in [this 27-second video](#) and described below. Students will need to follow this path:
 - a. Log in to your student account.
 - b. Click on the arrow in the upper right-hand corner of the screen, next to your email or username.
 - c. Click on "My Account." Scroll down.
 - d. Click on "Add Teacher." When the dialogue box appears, begin typing your teacher's email address. After you type the first 3-5 characters, your teacher's email address will appear in the drop-down menu.
 - e. Click on the teacher's email address.
 - f. Click "Add teacher."

End of Step 7.



STEP 8: ASSESS STUDENTS' PROGRESS.

SOAR Learning & Soft Skills provides seven different types of assessments:

1. Pre-Post Assessment: Scorecard*
2. Progress Markers: Activities & Anecdotal Observations
3. Quizzes: Multiple-Choice*
4. Quizzes: Constructed Response (essay questions)
5. Portfolio Development: Skill Demonstration Form & Portfolio
6. Final Exam: Multiple-Choice*
7. Final Project: Exit Presentation

*Automatically delivered in the software.

Where Can I Find the Assessments?

Some assignments are automatically assigned in the software, but printable versions of all assessments can be found in two locations:

- **In the Presentation Tool, by lesson/chapter.** (Teacher Account: Dashboard > Presentation Tool > Lesson #.)
 - **In the Teacher Guide, by type of assessment.** (Teacher Account: Dashboard > Teacher Guide > Student Assessments.)
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What Assessments Are in the Software?

Three of the seven assessment-types are included in the software:

- Pre/Post-Assessment: Scorecard
- Lesson Quizzes: Multiple Choice
- Final Exam: Multiple Choice

In general, if the software can collect quantitative data (Scorecard) or “grade” the assessment (multiple-choices quizzes and exam), it is in the software. Each lesson includes several “interactions.” The interactions are specifically intended to provide students with immediate feedback as they learn the new information. For this reason, interactions are NOT graded.

(continued) Step 8: Assess Students' Progress

How to Grade Study Skills

Because the nature of “soft skills” is very personal and somewhat invisible, assigning grades is a bit more subjective than other subjects. **For this reason, a grade of “credit/no credit” is very appropriate.**

If you are required to give a letter grade, we recommend placing lighter emphasis on the multiple-choice assessments, as they are not as strong a reflection of “mastery” as all other assessments. Below is an example of a recommended weight-distribution for grades:

Weight of Total Grade	Type of Assessment
0	Pre/Post-Assessment: Scorecard (Not intended for grading purposes)
30	Progress Markers: Activities & Anecdotal Observations
15	Quizzes: Multiple Choice
25	Quizzes: Constructed Response Portfolio Development: Skill Demonstration Form
10	Final Exam: Multiple Choice
20	Final Project: Exit Presentation

**Note that the multiple-choice assessments comprise only 25% of the total grade, in this example.*

If your schedule does not allow enough time for the subjective assessments (skill demonstration forms, constructed response essay questions, anecdotal observations, and Exit Presentation), we strongly suggested asking your administrator to allow this course to be graded as “credit/no credit.” The multiple-choice questions assess the narrowest slice of students’ comprehension. A “bad” grade in “study skills” would be very demoralizing to students and would cause more harm than good!

Gradebook Set-Up: SOAR Assessment Matrix

The “gradebook” in the SOAR Teacher Account only tracks two things: Scorecard data and scores for the multiple-choice quizzes/final exam; it is *not* a comprehensive gradebook for all assessments.

To help you set up your primary gradebook in your school’s software, we have compiled all SOAR assessments into a downloadable spreadsheet. This Google Sheet can be modified, converted to csv, and uploaded to your external gradebook.

You can access the SOAR Assessment Matrix from your Teacher Account (Dashboard > Teacher Guide > Student Assessments).

The screenshot shows a Google Sheet titled "SOAR Learning Assessment Matrix". The main content is a table with two columns: "Weight of Total Grade" and "Type of Assessment". The rows are as follows:

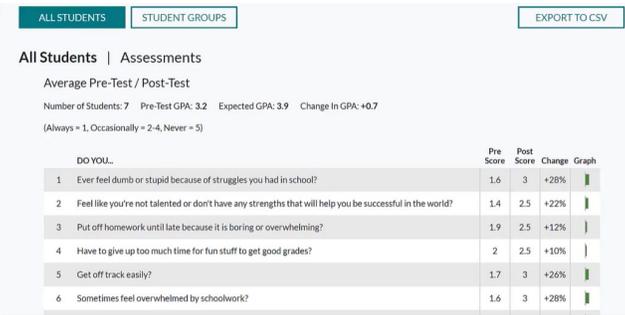
Weight of Total Grade	Type of Assessment
0	Pre/Post-Assessment: Scorecard (Not intended for grading purposes)
30	Progress Markers: Activities & Anecdotal Observations
15	Quizzes: Multiple Choice
25	Quizzes: Constructed Response Portfolio Development: Skill Demonstration Form
10	Final Exam: Multiple Choice
20	Final Project: Exit Presentation

Below the table, there is a note: "Note that the multiple-choice assessments comprise only 25% of the total grade, in this example." The spreadsheet also contains introductory text and instructions for using the matrix.

About Each Assessment: Objectives, Descriptions and Tips for Grading

1: Study Skills Scorecard*

*Assigned and graded (or collected) in the student software app.



WHAT DOES THIS ASSESSMENT MEASURE?

The Study Skills Scorecard measures the change in students' skills, attitudes, and perceptions, from the beginning of the SOAR® program to the conclusion of the course.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Scorecard includes 50 statements about the most common challenges students face in schools; students rank each statement (on a scale of 1-5), according to how much/little that challenge applies to themselves.

The Scorecard is assigned as the very FIRST and very LAST activity in the course; it is then used to measure changes in students' skills, attitudes, and perceptions as a result of the course. Once the Scorecard is completed at the end of the course, visual graphs of the data become available for teachers/administrators and students to SEE the impact of their new learning!

In addition to serving as a pre/post-assessment, the Scorecard also serves three additional purposes:

1. **The Scorecard introduces the *purpose* of each lesson to students.** At the start of each lesson, students will be shown the statements (common challenges) from the Scorecard that are addressed in the forthcoming lesson.
2. **The Scorecard closes each lesson.** At the end of each lesson, students are asked, "What solutions and insights did you learn to help resolve the following challenges from the Scorecard..."
3. **Most powerfully, the Scorecard tells each student, "I'm NOT the only one who struggles in school."** Every student struggles with *some things* in school, yet every student looks around... and sees everyone else "doing just fine." Students don't broadcast their struggles; everyone suffers in silence. The Scorecard breaks that silence and helps students see that many challenges are universal. It prompts students to start talking about these challenges, so that they can then help each other learn and master solutions!

WHEN SHOULD IT BE ASSIGNED?

As noted earlier, the Scorecard is the FIRST and LAST activity to be assigned in the course. For students:

- **Using the student software:**
 - **The pre-Scorecard** is automatically assigned as the very first activity; students must complete the Scorecard before accessing the lessons.
 - **The post-Scorecard** will appear in students' accounts after 70% of the lesson quizzes have been completed.
- **Using workbooks only,** the Scorecard linked below can be printed and distributed at the beginning and end of the course, to be used both as a pre-assessment and as a post-assessment. We recommend that you hold the pre-Scorecards throughout the course and re-distribute them to students at the end, for the post-assessment comparison.

TIPS FOR GRADING

The Scorecard is not intended to be graded or calculated into a grade.

(continued) About Each Assessment: Objectives, Descriptions and Tips for Grading

2: Progress Markers: Activities & Anecdotal Observations



WHAT DOES THIS ASSESSMENT MEASURE?

Activities and anecdotal observations monitor the students' application of strategies taught in the program.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

This assessment-category includes all activities in the core content of SOAR (app or workbook) and anecdotal observations you can make about students' implementation of strategies.

To see our list of recommended activities and anecdotal observations, open the SOAR Assessment Matrix (below) and look for the tab titled, "Progress Markers: Activity & Anecdotal Observations."

TIPS FOR GRADING

Activities and anecdotal observations are considered "practice;" they are to help you "screen" for students who need extra support and should be graded based on effort:

- Satisfactorily completed: 10 pts
- Attempted/Partially Complete: 5 pts
- Incomplete: 0 pts

Any student scoring 5pts or below will need help identifying the blockers that are preventing them from successfully using a strategy.

(continued) About Each Assessment: Objectives, Descriptions and Tips for Grading

3: Quizzes: Multiple-Choice*

*Assigned and graded (or collected) in the student software app.



WHAT DOES THIS ASSESSMENT MEASURE?

The multiple-choice quizzes measure students' comprehension of the information in each lesson.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each lesson concludes with one, ten-question quiz (except Lessons #9 & 10, which have TWO 10-question quizzes):

- **In the software**, quizzes are assigned and graded.
- **For students using workbooks only**, printable multiple-choice quizzes -and answer keys- are posted below.

WHEN SHOULD IT BE ASSIGNED?

The quizzes should be assigned after fully covering each lesson.

TIPS FOR GRADING

The software grades the quizzes on a 10-pt scale, 1 point per question.

continued) About Each Assessment: Objectives, Descriptions and Tips for Grading

4: Quizzes: Constructed Response (essay questions)



WHAT DOES THIS ASSESSMENT MEASURE?

The constructed response quizzes measure students' comprehension of information covered in a lesson and their ability to apply concepts to their current life situations.

These quizzes should also be used to screen for students who may be struggling to apply the concepts and strategies from a specific lesson, to their schoolwork.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

These quizzes include 3-8 essay questions, depending on the scope of each lesson.

WHEN SHOULD IT BE ASSIGNED?

The constructed response quizzes are assigned at the conclusion of each lesson. They can be assigned *in addition to* or *instead of* the multiple-choice quizzes and Skill Demonstration Forms.

TIPS FOR GRADING

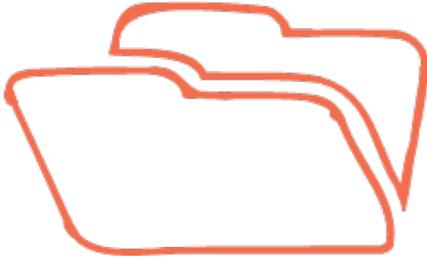
This assessment measures both content-knowledge and students' understanding of how to apply that knowledge. We recommend making each question with 5 points, according to the following rubric. If the answer is:

- Complete and accurate: 5 points
- Accurate, but could use more details: 4 points
- Partially accurate and/or complete: 3 points
- Partially accurate, but may have several errors or be missing a lot of detail: 2 points
- Something is accurate, but the answer is mostly inaccurate or incomplete: 1 point
- Answer is completely wrong and/or incomplete: 0 pts

Meanwhile, these quizzes are also to help you “screen” for students who need extra support; any student scoring 5 or below will need some additional intervention from you.

continued) About Each Assessment: Objectives, Descriptions and Tips for Grading

5: Portfolio Development: Skill Demonstration Form & Portfolio



WHAT DOES THIS ASSESSMENT MEASURE?

This activity measures students' application of a strategy from each lesson. It also helps students prepare for the final project, The Exit Presentation.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

This assessment is available in two formats:

- **A single-page reproducible** that can be distributed and assigned at the end of every lesson.
- **A digital file** (Google Slide) that serves as a digital portfolio. This file contains one slide for every lesson with the same prompts as the single-page reproducible; students complete one portfolio entry at the end of every lesson.



The skill demonstration form (or portfolio entry) prompts students to reflect on what they've learned -and applied- from each lesson. Students describe what they've learned, share evidence of how they applied that learning, and describe how they think that learning will help them in the future.

Ultimately, the Skill Demonstration Form/Portfolio prompts students to collect evidence throughout the course, in preparation for the final project, The Exit Presentation.



WHEN SHOULD IT BE ASSIGNED?

The Skill Demonstration Form should be assigned at the conclusion of each lesson. It can serve as the only assessment for each lesson, or it can be assigned along with one or both quizzes.

TIPS FOR GRADING

The Skill Demonstration Forms/Portfolio Entries are "practice" and preparation for the Exit Presentation. They are intended to help you "screen" for students who need extra support and should be graded based on effort:

For example:

- Satisfactorily completed: 10 pts
- Attempted/Partially Complete: 5 pts
- Incomplete: 0 pts

Any student scoring 5 or below will need some additional intervention from you.

continued) About Each Assessment: Objectives, Descriptions and Tips for Grading

6: Final Exam: Multiple-Choice*

*Assigned and graded (or collected) in the student software app.



WHAT DOES THIS ASSESSMENT MEASURE?

The multiple-choice final exam measures students' cumulative *knowledge* of the content taught in SOAR.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

For students using the software, the Final Exam is provided -and graded- in the software.

For students using the workbook only, a printable Final Exam is available, below.

WHEN SHOULD IT BE ASSIGNED?

The Final Exam should be assigned after students have completed all lessons in the software or read all lessons in the workbook.

TIPS FOR GRADING

In the software, the final exam is graded for you. There are 50 questions on the final exam, each question worth one point.

continued) About Each Assessment: Objectives, Descriptions and Tips for Grading

7: Final Project: Exit Presentation Instructions + Rubric



WHAT DOES THIS ASSESSMENT MEASURE?

The Exit Presentation evaluates students' ability to synthesize and apply the content learned.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Exit Presentation prompts students to: reflect on their newly developed skills, provide evidence to demonstrate their progress throughout the course, and explore the potential impact that study skills can continue to play in their lives. It is provided as a reproducible rubric, posted below.

WHEN SHOULD IT BE ASSIGNED?

Students can begin preparing for their Exit Presentation as they work through Chapter/Lesson 14, "How to Give Presentations."

TIPS FOR GRADING

The included rubric will guide grading.

Data Collection

Post-Scorecard Evaluations

OBJECTIVE: This assessment measures students' cumulative responses to the effectiveness of the program.

DO YOU...	Pre Score	Post Score	Change	Graph
1 Ever feel dumb or stupid because of struggles you had in school?	1.6	3	+28%	
2 Feel like you're not talented or don't have any strengths that will help you be successful in the world?	1.4	2.5	+22%	
3 Put off homework until late because it is boring or overwhelming?	1.9	2.5	+12%	
4 Have to give up too much time for fun stuff to get good grades?	2	2.5	+10%	
5 Get off track easily?	1.7	3	+26%	
6 Sometimes feel overwhelmed by schoolwork?	1.6	3	+28%	

In the software, the post-Scorecard becomes available in after a student has completed 70% of the quizzes.

Once students complete the Scorecard a *second time*, their comparative data will be visible from your Gradebook.

Grade-Tracking

OBJECTIVE: This assessment measures the long-term impact of your study skills initiative.



For long-term progress-monitoring, we suggest compiling and tracking students' grades for:

- two or more card-markings prior to introducing the *SOAR® Study Skills* system
- the card-marking(s) in which students are participating in the program, and for
- two or more card-markings following the program.

FAQ

1. **Q: Do I have to teach the lessons in the order they are presented in the book?**

A: No, each lesson is designed to stand alone. However, unless you have a reason to go out of order (and there are many valid reasons), we strongly recommend following the order presented in the workbook or software. When lessons are followed in this order, students naturally see how each lesson “builds into” the next. These connections allow students to see the strategies as a cohesive whole and build a better web of understanding.

2. **What if my school is not able to provide the recommended materials?**

A: No-cost alternatives for the planner ([reproducible: weekly layout](#)) and 3-D organizer ([Google Slides template](#)) are provided in the materials.

The binder is not required. However, it benefits students so much, we recommend making them a priority, especially over any other supplies recommended for SOAR.

Software-Related FAQs

3. **Can I adjust/reset quiz attempts?**

A: Yes. Quiz attempts can be manually reset by teachers, one-by-one. To do this, go into your Teacher Account and open the Gradebook. Find the student and the quiz score you wish to reset. Right-click on the score and follow the prompts.

4. **Will the software save students’ progress? How do students know where to continue in the software?**

A: If students did not finish the full lesson in one sitting, they will have to click through to find the exact spot where they left off.

Meanwhile, once a student completes a quiz, the checklist on the right-hand side of their dashboard will track their progress.

5. **For the audio narration, can we change the *default setting to mute*?**

A: We wish we could! A few years ago, we spent several weeks switching all our content to a new authoring software, specifically because the “new” software would allow this feature.

HOWEVER, that software had one fatal problem; it took F.O.R.E.V.E.R. to load the lessons! After one school-year of frustrating teachers and students, we spent weeks moving back to our initial software. While we know it is a pain to have to “mute” every time you open a new lesson, we found it to be a whole lot easier and quicker than waiting for the other program to load.

Meanwhile, a couple of things to think about:

- If you don’t want to use the narration, you can click the volume button to mute each lesson. Or, simply turn your computer’s volume down while using the software.
- Even for strong, experienced, adult readers, audio narration is a great tool to boost comprehension! Often, our ears will pick up details our eyes miss, and vice versa. So, maybe you shouldn’t be too quick to silence it. 😊

6. **Can we stop students from moving ahead?**

A: Our software is not able to block students’ from progressing forward. However, even if the software had that function, we wouldn’t recommend restricting students’ progress. If a student is eager to move ahead, there is no harm. When you/the class finally gets to the topic(s) he/she did ahead of time, the student will



simply be more prepared to participate in class discussions.

7. **Are the interactions graded?**

No, the interactions are provided as an instructional tool, not an assessment tool. They are provided to promote student-engagement as they first learn the content, and to provide immediate feedback to students about their comprehension. They are not provided for grading purposes.