

Cohort Leader Guide

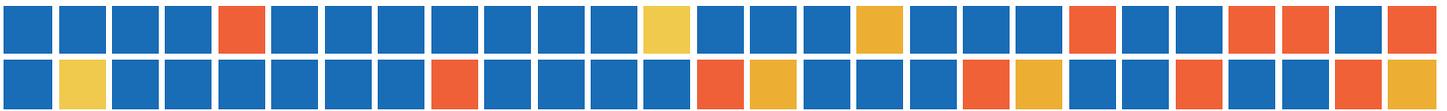


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Cohort Leader Agreement

Intent of Texas Reading Academies

- Provide educators with the essential skills needed to ensure children develop a strong foundation in reading and writing.
- Create a shared framework with a common vocabulary.
- Provide competency-based and cost-effective professional development with convenient access through the option of online modules.

Trainer Expectations

A. Deliver training with fidelity according to the intent and purpose stated above.

1. Deliver Texas Reading Academies only after completing all cohort leader training requirements, including a deep review of all provided content.
2. Deliver Texas Reading Academies with fidelity, adhering to and thoroughly communicating components of the science of teaching reading.
3. Adhere to the training materials as designed and deliver the full and complete content of each training.
4. When coaching and/or providing feedback to participants, utilize resources and exemplars from the Texas Reading Academies modules rather than outside sources.
5. Provide training participants with support through facilitated discussions and provide timely feedback on checks for understanding (CFUs) and artifacts.
6. Refer any training requests to the approved and affiliated training entity of the trainer.
7. Deliver Texas Reading Academies training only as a trainer acting on behalf of an approved Authorized Provider or local implementation district/charter that has a current memorandum of understanding (MOU) with an Authorized Provider.
8. Maintain confidentiality of participant performance and assessment materials, including artifacts and facilitator guides.
9. Maintain the confidentiality and privacy of Texas students by not accepting any videos showing students.

B. Ensure consistent quality of the Texas Reading Academies experience for all participants.

1. Deliver the training according to the provided structure and sequence.
2. Approve for Texas Reading Academies certification only those individuals who received the entire training and completed all requirements.
3. Manage documentation, feedback, discussion posts, and grading in a timely manner to facilitate the participant experience and House Bill 3 requirements.
4. Adhere to rubrics when grading artifacts and providing feedback for participants.
5. When serving as the first or second rater (not as a cohort leader), provide feedback only in Speedgrader. Do not access the gradebook for participants who are not in your cohort.



- 6. As a comprehensive coach, provide at least four live coaching sessions to each participant, utilizing the coaching protocols covered in Cohort Leader Training.
- 7. Provide feedback to the Texas Reading Academies development team and Texas Education Agency regarding the training process and materials to assist in the continuous improvement of the training, when applicable.

C. Stay current with training updates to provide participants with the most up to-date information and resources.

- 1. Attend meetings and workshops, review updated content, and participate in coaching as required by TEA.
- 2. Maintain active cohort leader status by completing updates, training, or assessment, as required.

Agreement Statement

As indicated by submitting this form, I acknowledge my understanding of and agree to abide by the above stated intent and expectations. I willingly accept the responsibility and the privilege of conveying Texas Reading Academies content and the significance embedded therein to Texas educators. I acknowledge that failure to comply with these guidelines may result in loss of trainer certification.

Signature (Full Name): _____

Date: _____



Cohort Leader Roles and Responsibilities

There are two types of Reading Academies cohort leaders. A **comprehensive coach** leads participants through the comprehensive implementation model. A **blended facilitator** leads participants through the blended model.

In some cases, a blended facilitator may also serve as a **support cohort leader** for other cohorts. (A comprehensive coach may not serve in this role since they already are committed full time to leading a cohort.)

All cohort leaders are provided with access to Cohort Leader Central, which includes robust training materials and resources, training calendar, technical assistance, and discussion boards.

Comprehensive vs. Blended Responsibilities

Comprehensive coaches and blended facilitators share many of the same essential functions:

- Share approved resources with participants through Canvas learning management system (LMS)
- Facilitate discussion, practice, reflection, and provide digital feedback
- Complete moderated grading of artifacts for multiple cohorts; for each cohort a coach leads, two additional cohorts are assigned
- Engage in ongoing professional development to support evidence-based literacy instruction through training and coaching around the science of teaching reading
- Share approved resources with participants through Canvas learning management system (LMS)
- Hold office hours to support teachers during the eleven-month window

The roles also have several key differences, including cohort size and the type of support provided for participants.



Comprehensive Coach

Full Time (40 hours)

A comprehensive coach leads up to 60 participants through **comprehensive training with a flipped learning model**, coordinating pre-work from the LMS platform and face-to-face sessions. Leading one comprehensive cohort is a full-time position.

- Provides **individualized scaffolded supports** to ensure educator understanding and evidence-based literacy instruction
- Supports online and face-to-face learning
- Establishes a literacy community of educators
- Provides four observations and four coaching sessions to each participant
- Provides **individual feedback and coaching around artifacts**
- May not serve as a support cohort leader

Blended Facilitator

Part Time (25 hours minimum) or Full Time (40 hours)

A blended facilitator **coordinates training through the LMS platform** with fidelity of implementation. May lead one to three cohorts (three is full time) with up to 100 participants per cohort.

- Provides **online scaffolded supports** to ensure educator understanding and application of evidence-based literacy instruction
- Establishes a **virtual** literacy community of educators
- Moderates online discussions
- Provides **digital feedback on artifacts** where appropriate or requested by participants
- Part-time facilitator may serve as support cohort leader in specific circumstances

Support Cohort Leader Responsibilities

When a blended facilitator also serves as a support cohort leader, these combined roles add up to a full-time (40 hours) commitment.

The number of cohorts that can be led and supported simultaneously is limited, and the responsibilities of a support cohort leader also vary depending on the Reading Academies pathway. The ELAR and Biliteracy pathways each provide specialized content aligned to the science of teaching reading.

ELAR Pathway

A **maximum of four cohorts** can be led and supported simultaneously. A blended facilitator leading three ELAR cohorts may support one additional cohort. If leading two, they may support two. If leading one, they may support three.

Support responsibilities:

- Monitor discussion posts
- Assist cohort leader with targeted support
- Grade optional artifact drafts
- Assist during office hours
- **Not** responsible for moderated grading

Biliteracy Pathway

A **maximum of three cohorts** can be led and supported simultaneously. A blended facilitator leading three Biliteracy cohorts may **not** serve as a support cohort leader. If leading two cohorts, they may support one. If leading one, they may support two.

Support responsibilities:

- Monitor discussion posts
- Assist cohort leader with targeted support
- Grade optional artifact drafts
- Moderated grading for biliteracy artifacts
- **Not** responsible for assisting during office hours



Grading Time Commitment

In addition to working with the cohort(s) and holding office hours, a Reading Academies cohort leader is responsible for grading artifacts and providing feedback to participants. Most of the grading is concentrated into two 30- to 35-day artifact grading cycles that occur around month five and month ten.

Grading and Feedback Total Hours

A blended facilitator with one cohort spends up to 200 total hours grading artifacts and providing feedback over the full eleven months:

- Grading drafts/artifacts for your own cohort: up to 35 hours (average 10 minutes per artifact)
- Meeting individually with your participants: up to 100 hours (to provide feedback and discuss grades)
- Moderated grading for two other cohorts: up to 65 hours (for 200 additional artifacts)

Comprehensive Coach
Full Time (40 hours) with One Cohort
 60 participants
 up to 170 hours

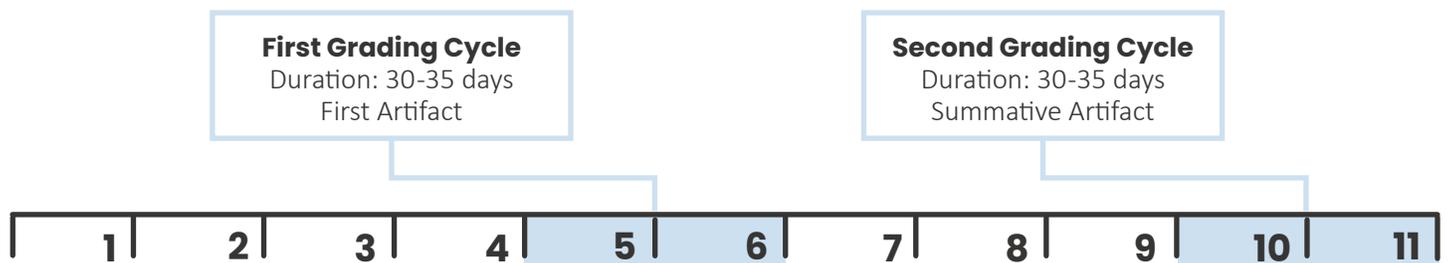
Blended Facilitator
One Cohort
 100 participants
 up to 200 hours

Blended Facilitator
Two Cohorts
 200 participants
 up to 400 hours

Blended Facilitator
Full Time (40 hours) with Three Cohorts
 300 participants
 up to 600 hours

Artifact Grading Cycle

During the full eleven months of Reading Academies, two 30- to 35-day moderated grading cycles occur. The first grading cycle occurs around month five. The second grading cycle occurs around month ten.



Moderated Grading

Reading Academies participants complete several required artifacts to demonstrate their learning. Moderated grading is applied to two artifacts for each participant to mitigate biases in grading. Each Reading Academies cohort is paired with two additional cohorts for moderated grading.

How It Works

- Participants’ names are hidden from graders to maintain anonymity. Since graders cannot identify specific students, this ensures they assess the artifacts objectively instead of based on past experiences.
- Multiple graders review each artifact and submit suggested grades. Then the cohort leader serves as moderator, reviewing the feedback before determining the final grade. This helps to ensure consistent grading across the state of Texas.

Cohort Leader Grading Responsibilities

During the moderated grading process, a cohort leader serves two distinct roles:

- **Anonymous grader:** The responsibility is to grade artifacts for other assigned cohorts.
- **Cohort leader:** The responsibility is to moderate artifact submissions and assign a final grade.

Each cohort leader grades artifacts for their own cohort(s) plus two to six other paired cohorts. The total number of artifacts each cohort leader is responsible for grading is determined by the total number of participants in the cohorts they are assigned. Grading typically takes five to ten minutes per artifact, depending on the artifact type.

A **comprehensive coach** only leads one cohort with 60 participants and may be paired with two additional moderated grading cohorts. A **blended facilitator** may lead up to three cohorts with 100 participants each and may be paired with up to six additional moderated grading cohorts (up to 100 participants each).

Comprehensive Coach

Leads 1 cohort


60

Grades up to 2 additional cohorts


60


60

Artifacts to grade: 180 maximum (up to 60 for their own cohort plus two other cohorts)

Blended Facilitator

Leads up to 3 cohorts


100


100


100

Grades up to 6 additional cohorts


100


100


100


100


100


100

Artifacts to grade: 300 to 900 (if leading the maximum of three cohorts and grading six other cohorts)

The Grading Cycle

During the full eleven months of Reading Academies, each participant submits two artifacts (one due around month five and another around month ten).

This grading cycle repeats for each artifact. It can take up to 35 days to complete a full grading cycle.

1. Participants submit optional artifact drafts to their assigned cohort leader.
2. Cohort leader reviews optional drafts and gives participants individualized feedback.
3. Participants submit artifacts for moderated grading.
4. Moderated grading begins.
 - Cohort leader serves as an anonymous grader for (two to six) other cohorts.
 - Each artifact is reviewed by two anonymous graders and receives a pass or fail grade.
5. Anonymous graders return grades to the cohort leader.
 - If both anonymous graders gave the same grade (pass or fail), the cohort leader does not need to review the artifact again.
 - If the two moderated graders did not agree on the grade (one pass, one fail), the cohort leader reviews the artifact again and determines the final grade to break the tie.
6. Cohort leader posts the grades. (Post the lower grade and rubric for passing artifacts; post the higher grade and rubric for failing artifacts.)
7. Cohort leader meets with any participant in their cohort with a failing artifact (within seven days after posting the grade).
8. Participant resubmits the artifact (within fourteen days after meeting with the cohort leader).
9. Cohort leader re-grades the artifact (resubmitted artifacts do not undergo moderated grading) and posts the new grade.



Comprehensive vs. Blended Models

Reading Academies includes multiple delivery models and implementation options to provide flexibility for districts.

Districts may choose between two Reading Academies delivery models: **comprehensive or blended**—or they may offer a combination to support the needs of individual teachers or campuses. Each of the Reading Academies pathways (ELAR, Biliteracy, or Administrator) can be delivered with either the comprehensive or blended model (permission required for comprehensive Administrator only).

After choosing the delivery model(s), districts then have two implementation options: (1) partner with an authorized provider (AP) to facilitate Reading Academies or (2) local implementation, which requires districts to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with an AP and hire/train their own Reading Academies cohort leader(s).



Comprehensive and blended delivery models:

- Cover the same content using the same learning management system
- Provide a cohort leader (either a blended facilitator or a comprehensive coach) to guide participants through the process
- Require submission of the same artifacts
- Require moderated grading of artifacts
- Are completed over a period of eleven months

However, there are several key differences between the two models, including cost, cohort size, and the type of support provided to cohort participants.

Comprehensive Model

\$3,000 per participant

Flipped learning model with pre-work in Canvas and live sessions. Delivered by a comprehensive coach who leads only one cohort of 60 participants at a time. Comprehensive coaches provide feedback through Canvas plus four personalized, job-embedded coaching sessions. Participants must show mastery for checks for understanding (CFUs) and artifacts.

Key benefits:

- Includes live learning sessions with smaller cohorts
- Additional personalized coaching

Blended Model

\$400 per participant

Consists of 100% online modules with competency demonstration. Delivered by a blended facilitator who leads up to three cohorts of 100 participants at a time. Blended facilitators provide feedback through Canvas and additional office hours. Participants must earn 80% or higher on CFUs and artifacts.

Key benefits:

- Less expensive per participant
- More flexibility and autonomy for districts and staff

Reading Academies Pathways

Prior to enrolling a teacher in Reading Academies, the district determines which pathway aligns most closely with the teacher's role and district needs. Each pathway provides specialized content divided into 12 modules aligned to the science of teaching reading (STR).

The ELAR, Biliteracy, or Dual Blended pathway can be completed in 60 hours. The Administrator pathway can be completed in 42 hours.

ELAR Pathway

Builds content knowledge in STR and the aligned evidence-based instructional practices that impact a student's literacy achievement within the English language. This pathway also supports students learning English as a second language. May be led by a certified ELAR or biliteracy cohort leader.

Who should enroll? educators, including classroom teachers, specialists, special education teachers, administrators

Biliteracy Pathway

Builds teacher knowledge and skills on STR for Spanish-English bilingual classrooms. Participants master Spanish and English evidenced-based literacy pedagogy, cross-linguistic connections, and knowledge to support student literacy achievement in both languages. This path supports all four [Texas Bilingual Education models](#). May only be led by a certified biliteracy cohort leader.

Who should enroll? Spanish-English bilingual educators (including classroom teachers, specialists, special education teachers) and Spanish-proficient administrators leading campuses with Spanish-English bilingual programming

Administrator Pathway

This pathway is for campus or district administrators only. Builds content knowledge and skills in STR by using information from the ELAR and Biliteracy pathways filtered through a campus leader's lens. Participants complete differentiated artifacts focused on identifying campus-level patterns and applying data-driven instructional change using Reading Academies concepts. May be led by a certified ELAR or biliteracy cohort leader.

Who should enroll? campus principals, assistant principals, district-level leaders

Dual Blended Pathway (ELAR and Biliteracy)

This option allows a district to enroll all participants together in one course. Participants choose to complete either 12 ELAR modules or 12 Biliteracy modules with artifacts in Spanish (participants may not mix ELAR and Biliteracy modules).

This pathway has some course structure differences: The cohort may be facilitated by a **biliteracy-certified cohort leader (preferred)** or by an **ELAR-certified cohort leader** responsible for ELAR participants **and a biliteracy-certified support cohort leader** to facilitate and grade all biliteracy participants. Due to the time commitment, Dual Blended biliteracy-certified support cohort leaders receive House Bill 3 credit. **No other support cohort leaders are eligible for this credit.**

Participants have access to all 12 ELAR and 12 Biliteracy modules in Canvas at once, but modules still must be completed in correct order and real-time data on module progression cannot be collected. The cohort leader must monitor participants individually.

Who should enroll? educators, principals, or administrators; ideal for local education agencies with a small number of ELAR and biliteracy K–3 teachers

After selecting a pathway, the district must choose between the comprehensive or blended model and select an authorized provider.

Comprehensive Model

A comprehensive cohort includes **30–60 participants**. This model is completed with a combination of **Canvas modules and live sessions** with extra coaching support.

To pass Reading Academies, participants must complete the pre- and post-test; complete pre-work (CFUs and discussion posts) and artifacts; attend live training sessions; and demonstrate mastery of Reading Academies content during classroom observation by the cohort leader.

The cohort leader documents and verifies attendance and completion of all requirements, and the participant receives a digital certificate verifying completion.



Blended Model

A blended cohort includes **50–100 participants**. Training modules are **delivered online**, and a facilitator provides feedback through Canvas and additional office hours.

Participants must complete all modules and demonstrate proficiency on checks for understanding (CFUs), discussions, and artifacts to receive credit.

The cohort leader affirms completion and **at least 80% proficiency** (including scores from inter raters) on artifacts. Once requirements have been met, the participant receives a digital certificate verifying completion.



Science of Teaching Reading Initiatives

Requirements for the science of teaching reading (STR) certification exam and Reading Academies were established in 2019 by the 86th Texas Legislature with the passage of House Bill 3 (HB 3). Reading Academies and the STR certification exam are different requirements that complement each other.

The [STR certification exam](#) demonstrates a beginning teacher’s proficiency in the science of teaching reading. [Reading Academies](#) is an eleven-month professional development program that continues learning and builds on knowledge of the STR in a school context.

Together, these programs provide teachers with the foundational knowledge to teach reading and writing and to effectively apply that knowledge in a classroom setting.

Science of Teaching Reading Certification

Texas teacher candidates receive training in STR competencies during their educator preparation programs. Then they must pass the STR exam to demonstrate beginning teacher readiness for early literacy instruction. Once hired by a Texas local education agency, teachers who pass the STR exam are also required to take Reading Academies.

Teacher candidates for intern, probationary, or standard certification in one of the following certification fields must successfully complete the STR exam:

- Early Childhood: Prekindergarten–Grade 3
- Core Subjects with the Science of Teaching Reading: Early Childhood–Grade 6
- Core Subjects with the Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4–8
- English Language Arts and Reading with the Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4–8
- English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies with the Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4–8

Teachers currently standard certified in Core Subjects: EC–6, Core Subjects: 4–8, English Language Arts and Reading: 4–8, or English Language Arts and Social Studies: 4–8 are not required to pass the STR exam for certificate renewal.

Reading Academies

All K–3 teachers and principals are required to complete Reading Academies by 2023. This requirement includes special education teachers, literacy specialists, and departmentalized teachers. Previous Reading Academies are not a substitute for the current HB 3 Reading Academies.*

- Provides the guidance and structure to implement STR in the classroom.
- LEAs can exempt teachers with all-level certification in art, health education, music, physical education, speech communication, theatre arts, or theatre.
- Districts have the flexibility to choose from several different delivery models to implement Reading Academies. Visit the [TEA HB 3 Reading Academies page](#) for an overview.

* Educators who completed the 2018–19 READ Grant are not required to attend HB 3 Reading Academies.

Cohort Closing Procedures

When a cohort reaches the end of Texas Reading Academies, the cohort leader is responsible for verifying completion and releasing grades before participants can receive credit.

The following checklists outline closing procedures, which are somewhat different for comprehensive coaches and blended facilitators.

Reading Academies participants receive a House Bill 3 certificate after the Module 12 Affirmation Statement has been graded.

Comprehensive Coach

Closing Checklist

- Verify moderated grading Artifacts 1 and 2 for mastery
- Verify that all three Canvas-graded artifacts were submitted
- Verify Module 1 pre-work was completed in Canvas
- Verify that participant completed four coaching cycles
- Ensure participant completes the Module 12 Affirmation Statement
- Grade Module 12 Affirmation Statement
- Upload attendance tracker and coaching session documents in Canvas

Blended Facilitator

Closing Checklist

- Verify Artifacts 1 and 2 have been through moderated grading
- Verify discussion posts are complete
- Checks for understanding (CFUs) must have 80% accuracy or higher
- Artifacts must meet 80% mastery or higher
- Grade Module 12 Affirmation Statement
- Release grades in gradebook