Transcript – Making Instructional Decisions

Presenter: So now that we have looked at what information is presented on the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener Class Summary Report, it is important to discuss how we can use this information to make instructional decisions. Thinking back to the purpose of the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener, we know that the universal screener can help us make two instructional decisions.

First, we want to determine which students are on track and which students are at risk for meeting our expectations in algebra and algebra readiness skills.

This type of decision is a criterion-referenced decision in that we are making a decision in reference to a specific criteria. In this case, the criteria we are using are the cut points for the tiered levels of instructional support. To review, we have three tiers of instructional support but each tier is further divided for greater precision in decision making.

The first cut-point we look at is to determine if students are on track (meaning that they are in Tier I) or are at risk for meeting our expectations in algebra (meaning that they are in Tier II or III). If we identify students as being in Tier I, we expect that they will need minimal to no additional instructional support to meet our expectations. These students should receive high quality core instruction.

When we look at the histogram, we can roll over the bins to see the names of the students who are in each of these categories. You can also obtain this information by looking at the tables below the histogram.

The second cut-point we look at is between Tier II and Tier III. Although students in both of these instructional tiers are at risk for not meeting our expectations, we know that students who are in Tier III have more significant risk than students who are in Tier II.

Students in Tier II are at some risk for not meeting our expectations and may need supplemental instructional interventions to be on track. Students in Tier III are at risk for not meeting our expectations and may need more intensive instructional support.

So, we just used the histogram to make our first decision: that is to determine if students are on track or at risk for reaching our expectations in algebra. We made this decision by looking at the cut points associated with each tiered level of instructional support and referencing the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener interpretive guide.

Transcript – Making Instructional Decisions (continued)

Presenter: The second decision we want to make based on the results from the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener is the degree of intensity of the instructional support students' who are at risk will need to meet our expectations. We can use our tiered levels of instructional support to help make this decision in that we know that a student in Tier III will need intervention supports that are of greater intensity

than students in Tier II. We can get more detailed information by exploring within each tier. We will use normative data to make this decision (meaning that we will look at students' scores in relation to other students' scores to help determine who might need more or less intense instructional supports and interventions to meet expectations in algebra.)

We can use the distribution within a tier to help us determine how students within these categories might differ in the level of instructional support they need. As we roll over each bar, we see a listing of students. These students have similar score ranges. Now what we don't know, because this is not a diagnostic test, are the reasons why these students scored within these categories or what their strengths or limitations might be that caused them to perform this way. However, what we do know is that these students may need more intensive instructional support than other students who might score higher on the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener, both within a category as well as across the distribution.

For example, we may notice that there are students within the Tier IIB category who have lower performance than other students who score within Tier IIB. If we look at the interpretive guide, students in Tier IIB are identified as needing supplemental interventions that are targeted to his or her needs. Students with lower performance, will likely need interventions of greater intensity than students with higher performance.

It is important to remember, however, that because this is not a diagnostic test we do not know the reasons why these students scored within this category or what their strengths or limitations might be that caused them to perform this way. However, what we do know is that these students may need more intensive support than other students who score higher than these students.

Transcript – ESTAR/MSTAR Pyramid and Interpretive Guide

Presenter: This diagram shows you the three-tiered levels of instructional support that form our three categories in which students will be placed, based on their scores on the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener.

The next decision that we can make is to look at the intensity of support that students might need. This is a norm referenced decision that will help us decide, once we've identified students within each category, what is the intensity of support that those students might need within that category. So for example, we might have ten students who are in category Tier IIB. But we know that for those students some scores will fall closer to the Tier IIA category marker, and some will fall closer to the Tier III category marker. So there is a differentiation between those students and it's very important that we understand that differentiation.

We will be evaluating percentiles and percentile ranks to better understand these differences. Remember that a percentile rank indicates the score at which a certain percentage of the students' score are at or below. So if we're looking at the 25th percentile, for example, a student who has that score is scoring at or better than 25 percent of the students who took this test. So the 25th

percentile is normatively referenced because it is in relation to the rest of the students who took the assessment.

To help us integrate the criterion referenced decisions and the norm referenced decisions, we've developed an interpretive chart. This will help us examine results on this assessment.

So you will see in this chart that what we've done is we've identified the performance levels. This helps us identify students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. We've also put descriptions on the chart that indicates the level of instructional support that the student might need. So, for example, you'll notice in Tier I the student needs minimal to no additional instructional support. Again, this means they have access to high quality core instruction.

Students in Tier II may need strategic instructional support. For Tier III, in this category, students will need intensive instructional support.

So next you'll see the middle two columns are color-coded. These color codings reference back to the reports that we've seen on the website.

Again, these are broken out into two categories within each tiered level of instructional support and provides the percentile range for students who have that score. The last column provides some additional interpretive information for those students whose scores fall within these categories. So in this column, we've tried to provide you with some additional information about how you can use this information to make instructional decisions.

For example, if you have a student who scored within Tier IIA, you can reference this chart and look at the information to identify that this student needs targeted support, including differentiated scaffolded instruction, additional practice, and corrective feedback. The student might also need additional instructional time, and progress should be monitored closely to evaluate the growth that this student is making.

Again, for this instructional support, please reference additional information that's available through the ESTAR/MSTAR project. This includes ESTAR/MSTAR intervention materials, as well as ESTAR/MSTAR academy trainings. You can also find additional information through widely available materials, through professional organizations, and through the United States Department of Education.

Within the interpretive guide and the ESTAR/MSTAR Universal Screener Reports, you can integrate these sources of information into a seamless instructional decision-making process.