

## Core Questions Rubric

*This serves as the rubric used for evaluation of all instructional materials bid for K-3 English Language Arts intervention materials for state adoption.*

### Content

**1. A. Alignment with Intervention Requirements:** The content aligns with the state's standards, benchmarks and clarifications for subject, grade level and learning outcomes.

*Voyager Passport aligns to Florida's K-3 B.E.S.T. Standards for ELA.*

**2. A. Alignment with Intervention Requirements:** The content is written to the correct skill level of the standards, benchmarks and clarifications in the course.

*Voyager Passport content is written to the correct skill level of the standards, benchmarks, and clarifications in a K-3 reading intervention course. Voyager Passport Level A aligns to Kindergarten, Voyager Passport Level B aligns to Grade 1, Voyager Passport Level C aligns to Grade 2, and Voyager Passport Level D aligns to Grade 3.*

**3. A. Alignment with Intervention Requirements:** The materials are adaptable and useful for classroom instruction.

*Voyager Passport Teacher Kits and Student Packs include everything needed for classroom instruction. The materials were designed to be adaptable and useful to accommodate a variety of intervention settings, and teachers are provided with several recommended implementation models to ensure the program meets the needs of their classroom and students.*

**4. B. Level of Treatment:** The materials provide sufficient details for students to understand the significance of topics and events.

*Voyager Passport provides sufficient details and background knowledge for students to understand the significance of topics and events. Each Voyager Passport Adventure (unit) starts with an Adventure Starter that introduces students to topics and builds background knowledge of the Adventure topic. This lesson engages students in discussions about real-life experiences and introduces key concepts that are relevant and meaningful.*

**5. B. Level of Treatment:** The content matches the standards for applicable components of reading.

*Voyager Passport is a comprehensive K-3 reading intervention that matches the standards for the six components of reading (oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension).*

**6. B. Level of Treatment:** The content matches the student needs, abilities and grade level through vertical alignment of each benchmark.

*Voyager Passport* is a K-3 reading intervention with instruction that matches the student needs, abilities and grade level through vertical alignment of each benchmark. In addition, *Voyager Passport* includes instruction that matches the vertical grade progression of the standards, allowing teachers to fill in instructional gaps and prerequisite skills that are needed for non-proficient readers to reach grade-level proficiency.

**7. B. Level of Treatment:** The content matches the time period allowed for teaching.

*Voyager Passport* lessons are designed for a 30-minute instructional session with an ample amount of differentiation time built into the ongoing instructional routine. For classes with additional time available or students that require more intensive instruction, there are supplementary resources that can be used to extend the lesson, making it a length of up to 45 minutes.

**8. C. Expertise for Content Development:** The primary and secondary sources cited in the materials reflect expert information for the subject.

The primary and secondary sources reflect expert information associated with the Science of Reading research and findings.

See the *Voyager Passport* Research Foundations report included in the back of this document.

*Voyager Passport* instruction was developed using scientifically proven methods and evidence associated with the vast body of research and study that has become known as the Science of Reading. In the new edition of *Voyager Passport* submitted for the Florida adoption, we have included “Teacher Talk” callout boxes in the Teacher Guides. These callout boxes highlight the scientific reasoning behind various instructional components and allow teachers to make a connection between what they are teaching in the lesson and the Science of Reading.

**9. C. Expertise for Content Development:** The primary and secondary sources contribute to the quality of the content in the materials.

The primary and secondary sources contribute to the quality of the content.

*Voyager Passport* was developed using the input and advice from a team of leading literacy researchers and experts, including the following:

- María Elena Argüelles, Ph.D. is an educational consultant who provides support to states, districts, and schools in their implementation of effective reading instruction for young English language learners (ELs) and struggling learners. Dr. Argüelles is the coauthor of several publications and a consultant to publishers that develop programs for struggling readers and ELs. In addition, she has teaching experience at the public school level as well as at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Her primary areas of interest are early reading instruction, students with reading difficulties, and reading instruction for ELS.

- Anne Cunningham, Ph.D. served as the UC Berkeley director of the Joint Doctoral Program in Special Education. She has served as an elected board member of the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading and American Educational Research Association's Division C- Learning and Instruction, as well as a member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Reading, and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*; *The Reading Teacher*; and *The California Reader*.
- Marcia Henry, Ph.D. has 47 years of experience in the field of reading and dyslexia, working as a teacher, diagnostician, tutor, and professor. A past president of the International Dyslexia Association and former director of the Center for Educational Research on Dyslexia at San Jose State University, Henry speaks frequently at conferences and writes for and serves on the editorial boards of several professional journals.
- Janette Klinger, Ph.D. is a professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder and is a former bilingual special education teacher. She has authored or coauthored more than 90 journal articles and book chapters and coauthored or coedited 10 books. In 2007, she coauthored *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties* with Sharon Vaughn and Alison Boardman.
- Julia Peyton, Ph.D. joined Voyager Sopris Learning in 2005 after teaching at the University of Oregon with Dr. Roland Good. Dr. Peyton served as a researcher on the DIBELS research team, spent seven years conducting research in the area of effective scientifically based supplementary reading instruction for at-risk populations, and has collaborated on multiple studies in the area of early identification and intervention for reading disabilities under the Office of Special Education Programs. She recently coauthored 7 articles in the area of reading interventions targeting at-risk populations. Dr. Peyton received her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Washington.

See the *Voyager Passport* Research Foundations report included in the back of this document.

In addition, Voyager Passport instruction was developed using scientifically proven methods and evidence associated with the vast body of research and study that has become known as the Science of Reading. In the new edition of *Voyager Passport* submitted for the Florida adoption, we have included "Teacher Talk" callout boxes in the Teacher Guides. These callout boxes highlight the scientific reasoning behind various instructional components and allow teachers to make a connection between what they are teaching in the lesson and the Science of Reading.

**10. D. Accuracy of Content:** The content is presented accurately. (Material should be devoid of typographical or visual errors.)

*Voyager Passport* content is accurate and devoid of errors.

**11. D. Accuracy of Content:** The content of the material is presented objectively. (Material should be free of bias and contradictions and is noninflammatory in nature.)

*Voyager Passport* content is presented objectively, free of bias and contradictions, and noninflammatory in nature.

**12. D. Accuracy of Content:** The content of the material is representative of the discipline. (Material should include prevailing theories, concepts, standards and models used with the subject area.)

*Voyager Passport* content is representative of the discipline of reading and, specifically, intensive reading intervention.

See the *Voyager Passport* Research Foundations report included in the back of this document.

In addition, *Voyager Passport* instruction was developed using scientifically proven methods and evidence associated with the vast body of research and study that has become known as the Science of Reading. In the new edition of *Voyager Passport* submitted for the Florida adoption, we have included “Teacher Talk” callout boxes in the Teacher Guides. These callout boxes highlight the scientific reasoning behind various instructional components and allow teachers to make a connection between what they are teaching in the lesson and the Science of Reading.

**13. D. Accuracy of Content:** The content of the material is factually accurate. (Materials should be free of mistakes and inconsistencies.)

*Voyager Passport* is factually accurate and free of mistakes and inconsistencies.

**14. E. Currency of Content:** The content is up-to-date according to current research and standards of practice.

*Voyager Passport* is up-to-date and aligns with current research and standards of practice.

**15. E. Currency of Content:** The content is presented to the standards and benchmarks in an appropriate and relevant context.

*Voyager Passport* content is presented to the standards and benchmarks in the appropriate and relevant context of a K-3 reading intervention.

**16. E. Currency of Content:** The content is presented in an appropriate and relevant context for the intended learners.

*Voyager Passport* is presented in an appropriate and relevant context for non-proficient readers in K-3.

**17. F. Authenticity of Content:** The content includes connections to life in a context that is meaningful to students.

*Voyager Passport* Levels are organized by Adventures (units), and each Adventure is anchored by a topic. These topics are introduced to students in the Adventure Starter, which makes connections between the topic and real life in a way that is engaging and meaningful to students.

**18. F. Authenticity of Content:** The material includes interdisciplinary connections which are intended to make the content meaningful to students.

*Voyager Passport* passages include topics from the content areas, such as science topics like wildlife, water, space, and deep-sea exploration; social studies topics like community engagement, money, and changes throughout history; and health topics like decision-making, personal connections, and responsibility. Passages represent a variety of cultures and time periods and reflect the ever-changing environment that students are a part of.

**19. G. Accurate Representation:** The portrayal of sex, ethnicity, age, work situations, cultural, religious, physical, and various social groups are fair and unbiased. (Please explain any unfair or biased portrayals in the comments section.)

The content and portrayals in *Voyager Passport* are fair and unbiased.

**20. H. Humanity and Compassion:** The materials portray people and animals with compassion, sympathy, and consideration of their needs and values, and exclude pornography, materials harmful to minors under s. 847.012, F.S., and inhumane treatment. (An exception may be necessary for units covering animal welfare.)

The content in *Voyager Passport* portrays people and animals with compassion, sympathy, and consideration of needs and values with no materials harmful to minors.

**21.** In general, is the content of the benchmarks and standards for this course covered in the material?

All material presented in *Voyager Passport* covers the benchmarks and standards for K-3 reading intervention instruction.

## Presentation

**1. A. Comprehensiveness of Student and Teacher Resources:** The comprehensiveness of the student resources address the targeted learning outcomes without requiring the teacher to prepare additional teaching materials for instruction.

All materials needed to teach *Voyager Passport* are included in the print materials and/or available in the *Voyager Passport* online platform. Preparation of external materials is not needed or required.

**2. B. Alignment of Instructional Components:** All components of the major tool align with the intervention program and each other.

All *Voyager Passport* materials and components of the major tool align with the intervention program/instruction and are designed to interoperate with each other.

**3. C. Organization of Instructional Materials:** The materials are consistent and logical organization of the content for the subject area.

*Voyager Passport* follows a deliberate scope and sequence that was designed to comprehensively and practically apply the science of reading research/evidence in a K-3 reading intervention.

**4. D. Readability of Instructional Materials:** Narrative and visuals engage students in reading or listening as well as in understanding of the content at a level appropriate to the students' abilities.

As a K-3 reading intervention, *Voyager Passport* materials include text ranging from decodable text (Levels A-B) to Lexiles of 900+ (Levels C-D) to support the needs of students reading below grade level. Passages within each level of *Voyager Passport* provide a balance of both informational and narrative text and include a variety of genres.

*Voyager Passport* passages and visuals include topics from the content areas, such as science topics like wildlife, water, space, and deep-sea exploration; social studies topics like community engagement, money, and changes throughout history; and health topics like decision-making, personal connections, and responsibility. Passages represent a variety of cultures and time periods and reflect the ever-changing environment of students.

**5. E. Pacing of Content:** The amount of content presented at one time or the pace at which it is presented must be of a size or rate that allows students to perceive and understand it.

*Voyager Passport* lessons are designed for 30-minute reading intervention sessions. Within each lesson, explicit instructions are provided for reviewing previously taught skills/concepts and introducing new skills/concepts. The size or rate at which skills/concepts are introduced or reviewed is designed to meet the unique instructional needs of students that are reading below grade level and need a reading intervention. Over time, the instruction is spiraled to reinforce skill development and to give students several opportunities to revisit skills taught and to achieve mastery.

**6. F. Ease of Use of Materials:** The materials are designed for practical use in the classroom and school and are easy to store and identify.

*Voyager Passport* material is easy to use and implement, requiring little preparation from the teacher. All lessons are direct and explicit in the Teacher Edition. All materials and manipulatives needed for teachers and students are included in the Teacher and Student Kits.

Both Teacher Kits and Student Kits are boxed and color-coded to make them easy to store and identify. They are also easy to transport for teachers who provide interventions in multiple locations/classes.

**7. Accessibility:** The material contains presentation, navigation, study tool and assistive supports that aid students, including those with disabilities, to access and interact with the material. (For assistance refer to the answers on the UDL questionnaire.)

*Voyager Passport* is a print intervention with online support tools for the student and teacher. Print material was developed to ensure color contrast accessibility. Print material can also be accessed through NIMAC for large print needs. Online tools aim to be WCAG compliant.

8. In general, how well does the submission satisfy PRESENTATION requirements? (The comments should support your responses to the questions in the Presentation section.)

*Voyager Passport* satisfies every requirement in the PRESENTATION section.

## Learning

**1. A. Motivational Strategies:** Intervention materials include features to maintain learner motivation.

*Voyager Passport* is intended for small-group instruction and includes a substantial amount of explicit instruction, teacher/student interaction, and multisensory activities to engage students and maintain learner motivation. The student workbooks are high-quality and visually stimulating with engaging reading topics and passages. There is also an Adventure map tracker that allows students to track their progress and success over the course of the year.

**2. B. Explicit Instruction:** The materials contain clear statements of information and outcomes.

*Voyager Passport* provides explicit and deliberate instructional language for consistent lesson delivery. The blue dialogue found in the Teacher Edition facilitates the directions/work, and each lesson component is outlined providing systematic instruction. There are specific correction procedures highlighted at point of use to regularly give feedback, redirect, and confirm accuracy.

**3. C. Guidance and Support:** The materials provide guidance and support to help students safely and successfully become more independent learners and thinkers.

*Voyager Passport* instruction follows a gradual release method of teaching that begins with teacher modeling of skills/concepts (I do), continues with teacher and student guided practice (we do), and ends with independent student practice (you do). In following this method, the ultimate goal of *Voyager Passport* is to guide and support students toward independent learning and thinking.

Additional features and strategies that promote independent student learning and thinking include the following:

- Explicit, systematic instruction promotes success in decoding, comprehension, and fluency skills.
- Step-by-step sequencing of instruction is easy for students to follow and understand.
- Repeated instructional routines allow students to be comfortable while new information is presented.
- Teacher modeling and Think-Alouds are embedded throughout the lessons.

**4. C. Guidance and Support:** Guidance and support must be adaptable to developmental differences and various learning styles.

Each *Voyager Passport* lesson provides teachers with explicit instructions on adapting to developmental differences and various learning styles. Examples include explicit corrective feedback, reteach lessons, hands-on manipulatives, virtual sound library, online resources, interactive whiteboard activities, differentiation lessons, and ELL enhancements.

In addition, every 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> lesson in an Adventure (unit) includes an “Adventure Checkpoint” to assess the specific skills taught in the Adventure. The results of these checkpoints allow teachers to make data-driven differentiation decisions, and, if administered online, students will automatically be grouped by instructional need, and teachers will be guided to differentiation lessons that will meet these student needs.

**5. D. Active Participation of Students:** The materials engage the physical and mental activity of students during the learning process.

*Voyager Passport* engages the physical and mental activity of students by using multisensory and kinesthetic learning strategies and activities such as phoneme-grapheme mapping; sound-tapping; word-building; making “text-to” connections (world, self, text); practicing skills with instructional games; and using white boards, letter cards and word cards, and graphic organizers.

**6. D. Active Participation of Students:** The materials include organized activities that are logical extensions of content, goals and objectives.

As a reading intervention for K-3 non-proficient readers, *Voyager Passport* includes a substantial amount of organized teacher/student interaction and instructional activities that are logical extensions of content/goals/objectives and designed to reinforce what is being taught in the lesson.

Examples include:

- Teacher-facilitated group discussions related to the Adventure topic
- Paired reading with the fluency books
- Instructional games embedded in the lesson
- Phonological and phonemic awareness activities
- Interactive Whiteboard exercises

**7. E. Targeted Instructional Strategies:** Instructional materials include the strategies known to be successful for teaching the learning outcomes targeted in the curriculum requirements.

*Voyager Passport* was developed using scientifically proven strategies and evidence from the Science of Reading research and includes instructional strategies consistent with how students learn to read. Each level of *Voyager Passport* concentrates on the priority skills needed to accelerate growth. In the lower grades there is a greater emphasis on oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency. As students acquire facility in word reading, the emphasis shifts more to advanced fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.



In *Voyager Passport* Levels A and B (K and 1), students engage in more speaking about text in each lesson. The text used is decodable in nature as students are learning letter sounds and learning the skill of decoding.

In Levels C and D (Grs. 2 and 3), students spend time reading, writing and speaking as skills are scaffolded. Students are actively involved in building meaning as they connect new concepts to prior knowledge, make predictions, make inferences, integrate their ideas in the text, and unlock vocabulary as words convey meaning and ideas.

**8. E. Targeted Instructional Strategies:** The intervention strategies incorporated in the materials are effective in teaching the targeted outcomes through the vertical alignments within the applicable components of reading for each benchmark in the B.E.S.T. ELA standards.

*Voyager Passport* strategies are effective in teaching non-proficient readers to read through the vertical alignments within all six components of reading for each benchmark.

Additional detail and examples from instruction are provided in our responses to the Six Components of Reading Rubric, which has been posted on the *Voyager Passport* online State Reviewer site: <https://www.voyagersopris.com/regional/florida/state-review/vp>.

**9. E. Targeted Instructional Strategies:** The instructional strategies incorporated in the materials are effective in teaching the targeted outcomes.

*Voyager Passport* was developed using scientifically proven strategies and evidence from the Science of Reading research and includes instructional strategies that are proven to be effective in teaching non-proficient K-3 students how to read.

**10. F. Targeted Assessment Strategies:** The materials correlate assessment strategies to the desired learning outcomes.

*Voyager Passport* instruction includes two primary assessment strategies to help teachers and students achieve reading proficiency.

Embedded in the explicit instructions of every lesson are informal assessments that allow teachers to quickly assess student progress with the skills being taught in the lesson. These informal assessments are supported by explicit instructions for immediate corrective feedback if needed.

In every Adventure (unit), every 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> lesson provides a formative assessment. These “Adventure Checkpoint” formative assessments allow students to demonstrate their proficiency in the skills taught in that Adventure and provide teachers with data to differentiate instruction.

**11. F. Targeted Assessment Strategies:** The assessment strategies incorporated in the materials are effective in assessing the learners’ performance with regard to the targeted outcomes.

*Voyager Passport* assessments are effective in measuring skill proficiency and are trackable through course progression. Based on the results, teachers can make data-driven decisions on how to differentiate instruction for individual student needs.

**12. G. Tiered Instruction:** Materials integrate instruction and intervention, which is delivered to all students in varying intensities (multiple tiers) based on student need.

*Voyager Passport* is an intervention solution designed for students reading below grade-level and needing more intensive instruction outside of the core reading program. As an intervention, *Voyager Passport* includes a substantial amount of differentiation opportunities and resources to adapt the intensity of the instruction and to meet the individual needs of students.

**13. G. Tiered Instruction:** Materials incorporate a comprehensive array of explicit instruction principles, as well as provide an appropriate dosage for student response and feedback from the teacher.

*Voyager Passport* follows a Structured Literacy instructional approach which is the practical application of the science of reading research and methodologies. In following the principles of Structured Literacy, *Voyager Passport* instruction is explicit and direct, gradually released (I do, we do, you do), logically sequenced, cumulative and systematic, and diagnostic/responsive. Embedded in the lessons, there are several opportunities for student response and teacher feedback.

**14. Universal Design for Learning:** This submission incorporates strategies, materials, activities, etc. that consider the needs of all students.

*Voyager Passport* provides multiple opportunities for students to engage in learning with multiple means of representation, action, and expression, upholding the tenets of the National Center for Universal Design for Learning.

**15. B.E.S.T. Standards Application:** Do you observe the appropriate application of ELA Expectations and/or Mathematical Thinking and Reasoning Standards as applicable?

*Voyager Passport* provides the appropriate application of ELA Expectations as needed.

**16.** In general, does the submission satisfy LEARNING requirements? (The comments should support your responses to the questions in the Learning section.)

*Voyager Passport* satisfies every requirement in the LEARNING section.

## Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rule

**1. Critical Race Theory:** Do materials align to Rule 6A-1.094124, F.A.C., which prohibits Critical Race Theory (CRT) in instructional materials?

CRT is not a component of *Voyager Passport*.

**2. Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Do instructional materials omit Culturally Responsive Teaching as it relates to CRT?

*Voyager Passport omits Culturally Responsive Teaching as it relates to CRT.*

**3. Social Justice:** Do instructional materials omit Social Justice as it relates to CRT?

*Voyager Passport omits Social Justice as it relates to CRT.*

**4. Social Emotional Learning:** Do instructional materials NOT solicit Social Emotional Learning (SEL), as these are considered extraneous and unsolicited strategies outside the scope of subject-area standards?

*Voyager Passport does NOT include Social Emotional Learning materials and strategies.*

**5. Principles of Individual Freedom:** Do instructional materials align to s. 1003.42(3), F.S., by acknowledging that all people are equal before the law and have inalienable rights and materials are consistent with the following principles:

- (a) No person is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex*
- (b) No race is inherently superior to another race.*
- (c) No person should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly on the bases of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, or sex.*
- (d) Meritocracy or traits such as hard work ethic are not racist but fundamental to the right to pursue happiness and be rewarded for industry.*
- (e) A person, by virtue of his or her race or sex, does not bear responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex.*
- (f) A person should not be instructed that he or she must feel guilt, anguish, or other forms of psychological distress for actions, in which he or she played no part, committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex.*

*The publisher of Voyager Passport acknowledges s.1003.42(3), F.S. and complies to its principles.*

**6. Student Welfare:** Do instructional materials align to s. 1001.42(8)(c)3., F.S., in grades K-8 to EXCLUDE instruction regarding sexual orientation or gender identity except as provided by ss. 1003.42(2)(n)3. and 1003.46, F.S.? If such instruction is provided in grades 9 through 12, is the instruction age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards?

*The publisher and authors of Voyager Passport acknowledge s. 1001.42(8)(c)3., F.S. and exclude any instruction regarding sexual orientation or gender identity. Voyager Passport is developmentally appropriate for students in grades K-3.*



# *Voyager Passport*<sup>®</sup> Research Foundations

## Phonological Awareness

Research has established that the most effective interventions in reading incorporate instruction in phonemic awareness with training in letter-sound correspondences (Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1999) and explicit instruction in alphabetic and phonemic decoding skills (Foorman, Francis, Fletcher, Schatschneider, & Mehta, 1998; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). For this purpose, *Voyager Passport*® provides systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics in Levels A–F.

Phonological awareness is a skill that helps readers distinguish and work with parts of oral language such as rhyming, syllables, and word parts. Students who are successful in rhyming, alliteration, word repetition, and syllable counting will be prepared to translate those skills when learning how to read, spell, and write. Phonemic awareness (PA) is the ability to recognize and manipulate the individual sounds in words. The most critical skills in PA are blending (e.g., the sounds /b/ /ă/ /t/ make the word bat) and segmenting (e.g., the word bat has the sounds /b/ /ă/ /t/). PA, especially segmenting and blending individual sounds in simple spoken words, predicts future reading problems in kindergarten and first grade (Scarborough & Brady, 2002). PA instruction is most effective when sounds are paired with letters, when one or two skills are taught at a time, and when students are taught in small groups (Ehri, Nunes, Willows, Schuster, Yaghoub-Sadeh, & Shanahan, 2001). PA is critical for learning to read and write any alphabetic writing system (Brady, 2011; Boyer & Ehri, 2011).

## Phonics

The goal of phonics instruction is to teach students the relationships between spoken sounds and printed letters for use in reading and spelling words. Systematic and explicit instruction in phonics, including word patterns, morphemes, syllable types, affixes, and strategies for decoding multisyllabic words, is the most effective way to ensure reading growth (Berninger et al., 2003; Henry, 2003).

To read a wide range of words, students must first learn the sounds associated with the letters. Beginning reading and spelling instruction that includes systematic, explicit phonics has the edge over approaches that indirectly or incidentally teach phonics (Boyer & Ehri, 2011). *Voyager Passport* lessons begin the word study element by teaching specific sounds associated with single letters, vowel teams, diphthongs, and digraphs followed by opportunities to read words with the newly learned pattern and judicious review of previously taught phoneme-grapheme relationships. The instruction builds in *Voyager Passport* to teach the six important syllable types, affixes, and strategies for decoding multisyllabic words. Words with irregular spelling patterns are also taught explicitly with extensive review. Explicit instruction means the teacher provides clear and precise instruction, and systematic instruction means that the teacher has a specific plan or sequence for introducing letter-sound relationships (Kilpatrick, 2015). The phonics and spelling instruction in *Voyager Passport* is directly linked to word, sentence, and passage reading. Students receive immediate practice applying newly learned phonics skills in text. The text in *Voyager Passport* has been specially designed to correspond with the phonics skills students are learning while engaging them in high-interest topics.

## Fluency

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), fluency is the ability to read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluent readers sound as if they know what they are reading about and are able to focus on comprehension without directing a large concentration of resources to decoding words.

Fluency instruction is an often forgotten component of reading instruction, particularly in the upper elementary grades. However, fluency is a key component of successful reading. Repeated reading with guided and informed feedback is an effective practice for improving reading fluency and reading achievement (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Homan, Klesius, & Hite, 1993).

Fluency is specifically addressed in every *Voyager Passport* lesson from *Voyager Passport* A–F. *Voyager Passport* begins fluency instruction with early reading skills in *Voyager Passport* A, including naming letters, naming sounds, and reading words. As students develop more advanced reading skills, the fluency lessons focus on text-level reading utilizing repeated reading. Teachers model appropriate reading rates and expression. Students repeatedly read passages aloud with feedback and support to improve their reading rate. Strategies for chunking text are also explicitly taught to improve overall reading rate. Finally, timed readings motivate and challenge students to improve their rate while monitoring their own progress.

The repeated exposures in *Voyager Passport* provide students who are struggling to learn to read with the type of practice that more proficient readers have mastered in utilizing phonic knowledge to figure out unknown words (Ehri, 1991; National Reading Panel, 2000). Practice in decoding is followed by opportunities to read the material fluently. In the *Voyager Passport* lessons, students benefit from experiences as proficient readers of text through the use of modeling, partner reading, and repeated reading of the same passage.

The multiple exposures provided in the lessons allow students to develop confidence along with proficiency.

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words a person understands and uses in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students learn word meanings through direct and indirect experiences with oral and printed language (National Reading Panel, 2000).

One of the most well-established findings of educational research is that reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge are highly correlated with one another (Adlof & Perfetti, 2014). Direct vocabulary instruction is most effective when words are selected and incorporated in text based on their usefulness in language and importance to comprehension (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

*Voyager Passport* addresses vocabulary instruction directly and indirectly. In *Voyager Passport* A and B, specific high-utility words are incorporated in teacher Read-Alouds and discussions with students to extend the meanings of the words taught. In *Voyager Passport* C and D, students read the passages with the teacher. At these levels, vocabulary words are taught as part of the passage reading and comprehension section of the Read to Understand component. In *Voyager Passport* E and F, new word meanings are directly taught, students are provided with oral and written practice opportunities to gain facility with the new words, contextual uses of the words are identified, and words are utilized in passages allowing for integrated discussions of word meanings and passage meanings. Students interact with the words in new contexts in subsequent lessons. Direct, explicit instruction in vocabulary that students will encounter frequently in text occurs throughout the lessons in *Voyager Passport*.

## Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand and gain meaning from language. Listening comprehension refers to gaining understanding through spoken language, while reading comprehension refers to gaining understanding through written language. Comprehension abilities are the direct result of active reading in which readers think about their reading, making connections and inferences to understand text. Comprehension can be improved by teaching students to monitor their comprehension, organize and retell information presented, recognize story structure, generate questions about the text, predict outcomes in the text, and confirm or revise predictions (National Reading Panel, 2000).

*Voyager Passport* lessons effectively incorporate comprehension instruction in the Read to Understand component before, during, and after reading. In *Voyager Passport* A and B, both listening and reading comprehension are a focus. In Levels C–F, as students begin reading more difficult text, reading comprehension becomes the main focus. Critical comprehension strategies are taught and practiced throughout the lessons, including: previewing text; building background knowledge and activating prior knowledge; identifying text features; making and verifying predictions; retelling; identifying facts and details; generating questions; sequencing; identifying cause and effect; summarizing; generating main ideas; comparing and contrasting; and examining story structure. The comprehension strategies are explicitly taught in small, sequential steps and modeled by teachers. Students then implement and practice strategies with text read by the teacher (listening comprehension) and text read by students (reading comprehension). Comprehension techniques are reviewed frequently throughout *Voyager Passport* so students receive multiple practice opportunities and retain mastery.

## References

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