

RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS AND DESIGN:

VOYAGER PASAPORTE™
SPANISH READING INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Voyager Expanded Learning®
Research and Development





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Program Overview

Reading is a complex process of converting printed symbols into language and meaning. Students do not learn to read naturally, even in an orthographically regular language like Spanish, and many students benefit from explicit instruction that is carefully sequenced and paced. However, even with effective instruction, some students do not benefit adequately from their core reading program and require supplemental instruction. Without well-designed supplemental instruction, these students will struggle with reading and be unable to achieve total mastery of the reading process. However, a knowledge base exists to guide effective instructional practice and prevent most students from experiencing reading failure. Converging research provides a blueprint of the five critical components of early reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Explicit, systematic instruction in each of these components is most effective for ensuring that the highest percentage of students succeed in the reading process.

Voyager Pasaporte™ provides direct, systematic instruction in each of the essential reading components and is designed as an intervention program for students for whom the core reading program is not sufficient. The lessons are based on the latest scientific knowledge about effective reading instruction and are carefully designed to effectively and efficiently address each of the strategies and skills necessary for students struggling with reading to learn to read fluently with comprehension.

Phonemic Awareness

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 /m/ /e/ /s/ /a/ make the word *mesa*) and segmenting (e.g., the word *mesa* has the sounds /m/ /e/ /s/ /a/). Phonemic awareness is most effective when paired with letters.

Phonological abilities account for significant differences between good and poor readers. For students learning to read in Spanish, syllabic awareness is not enough to master the alphabetic code. Students need to acquire phonemic awareness (Gonzalez & Gonzalez, 1994). Students with low phonemic awareness are at risk for reading difficulties. However, students with low phonological abilities who receive explicit instruction in phonemic awareness can achieve greater reading success. Therefore, phonemic awareness is an important component of reading instruction in kindergarten and early first grade.

To make the greatest gains in reading, students must learn to blend and segment individual sounds in words. Basic segmenting ability is important in the beginning stages of literacy acquisition, but manipulation is a better predictor of reading ability by first grade. Student gains in reading and spelling are strongest when print is integrated with phonemic awareness instruction.

Voyager Pasaporte is designed to capitalize on the most current and convincing scientifically based research in reading, including the most recent and compelling research on phonemic awareness. Critical phonemic awareness skills are well integrated within each lesson so that students learn to segment and blend the sounds of language, map them to print, and have ample time to practice and demonstrate their learning.

The Voyager Pasaporte intervention program addresses phonemic awareness explicitly in kindergarten and early first grade. All of the lessons in the first half of kindergarten incorporate phonemic awareness instruction. Students learn to manipulate individual sounds in words in a carefully sequenced series of lessons. First, students learn to isolate beginning sounds in words. This prepares students for the key skills of segmenting and blending words and sounds. As students gain facility with manipulating sounds orally, print is integrated with PA activities such as Stretch and Slide with Letters. These integrated activities transition to phonics and spelling lessons in which students can apply what they have mastered in phonemic awareness.

Phonics

Phonics instruction is the systematic use of sound-symbol relationships to teach the reading and writing of words. The goal of phonics instruction is to teach students the relationships between spoken sounds and printed letters for use in decoding and spelling words.

Systematic and explicit instruction in phonics is the most effective way to ensure appropriate reading growth in students. The direct teaching of a planned sequence of sound-symbol relationships and their use in reading and spelling words improves students' word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension. To be most effective, this instruction should begin early.

Voyager Pasaporte has utilized the extensive research base in phonics to develop systematic and explicit phonics and spelling lessons that begin in kindergarten. Scaffolded instruction builds in difficulty through the intervention levels, incorporating letter combinations, affixes, and strategies for decoding multisyllabic words. Words with irregular spelling patterns are also taught explicitly with extensive review. Phonics and spelling instruction in Voyager Pasaporte is directly linked to word, sentence, and passage reading. Students have immediate practice opportunities to apply newly learned phonics skills in text. Voyager Pasaporte text has been specially designed to correspond with the phonics skills students are learning through interesting, engaging story topics. The progressive sequence supports errorless learning in which students can be 100% successful with word and passage reading.

In addition to reading words, students apply their phonics skills to spelling and writing. The frequent application of phonics to both reading and the reciprocal skill of spelling deepens students' knowledge of the sound-symbol system.

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to accurately and quickly read text. This ability is preceded by facility with early reading skills such as naming letters and sounds, and reading words. Fluent reading allows readers to focus on comprehending and gaining meaning from text. Therefore, fluency is directly related to reading comprehension.

Fluency instruction is an often forgotten component of reading instruction. However, fluency is a key component of successful reading. Effective fluency instruction should provide specific time for practicing reading and rereading text accurately, quickly, and with expression. Before students have the necessary skills to read connected text, fluency instruction should include the building blocks of reading, including naming letters or sounds and reading words automatically. Because of the orthographic transparency of the language, students learning to read in Spanish will be able to practice reading multisyllabic words in text early in the acquisition of reading skills.

Once students can read connected text, repeated reading with feedback is an effective practice for improving fluency and reading achievement (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Homan, Klesius, & Hite, 1993). In fact, feedback from peers or teachers while reading is an essential component of reading fluency instruction. Another essential component of fluency instruction for students learning to read in Spanish is the level of student engagement (De la Colina, Parker, Hasbrouck, & Lara-Alecio, 2001).

Voyager Pasaporte fluency lessons are specifically designed to incorporate all of the research findings for effective fluency instruction. Fluency is specifically addressed in every Voyager Pasaporte lesson from kindergarten through second grade. The program begins fluency instruction with early reading skills in kindergarten, including naming letters and sounds, and reading syllables and words. As students develop more advanced reading skills, the fluency lessons focus on text-level reading. Teachers model appropriate reading rates and expression as well as guide students through choral reading of engaging text. 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.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words a person understands and uses in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary is directly related to reading comprehension as students try to make meaning of the words in text.

Students learn word meanings through direct and indirect experiences with oral and printed language (National Reading Panel, 2000). First, it is imperative students have many opportunities to engage in discussions about new experiences and learn new words to build on their previous knowledge. One effective avenue to building students' oral vocabulary is teacher read-alouds (Robbins & Ehri, 1994). During read-alouds, teachers read to students and engage them in meaningful book discussions about new words and concepts while connecting new knowledge with students' previous experiences. Instruction of specific word meanings is also necessary to increase student exposure to novel words. 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). Repeated exposure to new vocabulary in a variety of contexts is also vital to ensuring significant student reading gains.

Voyager Pasaporte addresses vocabulary instruction both directly and indirectly as the research suggests. A carefully planned sequence of word introduction is skillfully meshed with read-alouds, student passage reading, comprehension activities, and text discussions. This design allows repeated exposure to new vocabulary in a variety of contexts using oral and written language.

In kindergarten and first grade, specific high-utility words are identified for instruction. These words are incorporated in read-aloud stories and discussions with students to extend the meanings of the words taught. Discussion points and questions allow students to examine new words in a variety of contexts while connecting words and concepts to their prior knowledge. Additionally, the newly taught words are repeated throughout the week in daily stories to allow ample practice opportunities as students learn and clarify word meanings in different contexts.

In second grade, a similar system is used, but students read the stories with the teacher. At this grade level, vocabulary words are taught both in the fluency component and as part of the passage reading and comprehension section of the word study component. In both the components, word meanings are directly taught, students are taught to identify unknown words, words are utilized in passages for

context, and discussions regarding word meanings along with passage meanings are integrated. High-frequency, useful words have been selected to extend students' vocabulary in contexts that will most effectively assist in their reading growth.

Using the widely recognized criteria for word selection by Beck and colleagues in *Bringing Words to Life*, English Language Learners are taught Tier 1 and Tier II cognates, such as *generoso/generous* and *considerado/considerate*, and false cognates such as *isistir/assist* are pointed out in the intervention lessons. Voyager Pasaporte intervention lessons provide a rich context for extending vocabulary instruction through multiple ongoing literacy activities.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand and gain meaning from language. Listening comprehension refers to gaining understanding through spoken language, and 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 specific comprehension strategies. This includes 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; Pressley & Wharton-McDonald, 1997; Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996). The techniques of summarizing and generating main ideas are effective strategies to teach students how to improve comprehension.

Comprehension instruction should begin with listening comprehension when students first begin reading instruction. High-level comprehension strategies, such as making inferences, can be learned through direct teaching and practice with teacher-read stories (Grant, Elias, & Broerse, 1989). Early listening comprehension instruction makes the transition to reading comprehension more efficient. Comprehension instruction continues with reading as students begin reading text.

Voyager Pasaporte utilizes the most effective research-based comprehension instruction at all grade levels. By teaching critical strategies for understanding text, teachers give struggling readers the tools they need to read grade-level texts. Voyager Pasaporte focuses on the skills most struggling readers lack, teaching them with intensity and deliberation while providing ample practice to close the gap between struggling readers and their classmates.

In kindergarten and first grade, both listening and reading comprehension are a focus. In second and third grade, as students gain facility with listening comprehension and begin reading more difficult text, reading comprehension becomes the main focus. Critical comprehension strategies are taught and practiced throughout the lessons, including monitoring comprehension through questioning, summarizing, generating main ideas, predicting and checking predictions, 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). All comprehension techniques are reviewed frequently throughout the program so students receive multiple practice opportunities and retain mastery.

Effective Features of Instruction

Reading instruction for struggling readers learning to read in Spanish is most effective when taught in small groups. The explicit lessons must move at a quick pace to ensure students have ample practice opportunities and to use every minute of instructional time. In addition, students must receive feedback about their responses, followed by additional opportunities to respond and practice new material correctly. These instructional features allow students to master skills efficiently. Once a skill is mastered, sufficient review is necessary to ensure students maintain facility with important reading skills. Reading growth is at its highest when these features of instruction are incorporated in daily lessons (Coyne, Kame'enui, & Simmons, 2001).

Voyager has designed Voyager Pasaporte lessons around these effective features of instruction. All lessons in each reading component provide explicit instruction in every step of the reading process, with teacher modeling followed by multiple practice opportunities. The multiple opportunities for student response throughout each lesson maximize the amount of time students spend actively engaged in the content. Small-group instruction and the use of choral and individual student responses add extensive practice for all students. Feedback is an important feature of the Voyager Pasaporte program, and specific error corrections are provided to facilitate the most efficient student learning. All reading skills and strategies taught are continually reviewed within and across grade levels. By integrating these features of effective instruction with the critical components of reading instruction, Voyager Pasaporte provides a complete reading intervention program to give struggling readers the tools they need to read on grade level.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of any instructional program. An assessment system is critical for identifying students in need of additional support and monitoring their reading progress. The most effective instruction results from ongoing assessment that allows instruction to be continually evaluated and modified where necessary (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, & Stecker, 1991).

Included with Voyager Pasaporte is a method of assessment called *Indicadores dinamicos del éxito en la lectura*™ (IDEL™). IDEL is based on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills™ (DIBELS™), which was developed by Dr. Roland Good and colleagues at the University of Oregon. This system of dynamic indicators uses benchmark measures to identify students struggling to read in Spanish and to track students' progress during intervention. VPORT™, Voyager's online data management system, allows easy access to student data for monitoring student skills and informing instruction.

Benchmark assessments are given to all students at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. These assessments provide checkpoints of critical skills to ensure all students are on track to becoming grade-level readers. Additionally, benchmark assessments identify students progressing faster or slower than average. Instruction can be adjusted accordingly to ensure all student levels are addressed. Students below benchmarks in any critical area are monitored carefully. Instruction can be adjusted for any student progressing at a slower rate. Through VPORT, teachers can analyze class data, compare student data against a trajectory of desired learning, and differentiate instruction to meet student needs.

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