PASSPORT READING

JOURNEYS™

Research Foundations of
Passport Reading Journeys

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"One of the most vexing problems facing middle and secondary school teachers today is that many students come into their classrooms without the requisite knowledge, skills, and disposition to read and comprehend the materials placed before them" (Snow, 2002, p. 34). As a result of these difficulties, the gap between struggling readers and their peers widens each school year to the point that many adolescents who have difficulty with reading cannot meet the academic demands of content-area instruction and are unable to perform adequately on state level reading and content-area tests. Students who struggle with reading may require intense and focused instruction to get back on track (Torgesen et al., 2007). Many of these students can close the gap between their current reading performance and expected reading performance, but it will take intensive daily interventions using the most effective research-based instructional practices.

This document provides the research foundation for *Passport Reading Journeys™*. As you will see from reviewing this research base––the instructional practices, materials, and technology provided by *Passport Reading Journeys* integrate comprehensive and robust research with motivational practices that enable older students with reading difficulties to close the gap between their current reading performance and grade-level expectations.

Passport Reading Journeys is designed to meet the complex and varied needs of adolescent students who struggle with reading and read significantly below grade level. The exciting format and motivating videos with interesting text engage even the most reluctant readers. The explicit and systematic instruction advances word study (including decoding and morphology), fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension— those skills and strategies that struggling adolescent readers need to read, understand, and learn effectively in the content areas.

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(Torgesen et al., 2007).

Summary of Research Support for *Passport Reading Journeys*

Comprehensive reading intervention for adolescents must incorporate instructional techniques proven to work for students with reading difficulties. Fifteen key elements of effective adolescent literacy programs are recommended in R*eading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy: A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). Some of the key instructional elements include direct, explicit comprehension instruction, effective instructional principles embedded in content, motivation and self-directed learning, text-based collaborative learning, a technology component, and ongoing formative assessment of students.

Several syntheses and meta-analyses have examined the research on effective instruction for older students with reading difficulties (Edmonds, et al., in press); Scammacca et al., 2007; Torgesen et al., 2007). These studies provide empirical resources for defining a research-based intervention for older students with reading difficulties. Two reports—*Interventions for Adolescent Struggling Readers: A Meta-Analysis*

with Implications for Practice (Scammacca et al., 2007) and *Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction* (Torgesen et al., 2007)—are available from the National Center on Instruction at http://www.centeroninstruction.org. In summary, the following key components are essential to assuring improved outcomes for older students with reading difficulties:

- Word study
- Reading text fluently
- Vocabulary knowledge
- Comprehension
- Background, prior, and conceptual knowledge related to content
- Motivation and engagement
- Effective instructional practices

Many wonder whether there is convincing evidence that older students with reading difficulties can make the kind of progress necessary to benefit from reading interventions. An important question to address is: Overall, when we examine the research on interventions for students with reading difficulties, how much progress do they make? Fortunately, we know from approximately 13 studies of students with reading difficulties that the overall estimate of effects from interventions on reading comprehension is above .70 (Edmonds et al, in press). This finding provides evidence that students can improve their reading comprehension when provided a targeted intervention. This information is important because many students with reading difficulties are not provided adequate instruction in reading comprehension targeted at improving their understanding and learning from text.

Text with current, relevant information worth knowing, effectively organized lessons, and helpful instructional dialogue motivates teachers as well as students.

There are many other key areas related to reading comprehension to consider when developing effective instruction. The relationship between the sociocultural context and the student, teacher, and setting are considerations that can promote instructional outcomes. Social and affective variables related to students' interest and motivation make for valuable understanding of the role of context on students' comprehension. Text with current, relevant information worth knowing, effectively organized lessons, and helpful instructional dialogue motivates teachers as well as students.

Another work, *Informed Choices for Struggling Adolescent Readers: A Research-Based Guide to Instructional Programs and Practices*, provides an overview of adolescent literacy and what research has shown works best with this population (Deshler, Palinscar, Biancarosa, & Nair, 2007). Adolescents who struggle or students with disabilities can make gains if critical features are carefully integrated into literacy instruction. Among the features that promote good reading are decoding, fluency, vocabulary, basic comprehension skills, and comprehension strategies. In addition to developing these academic skills, engagement and motivation must take center stage in determining reading achievement for adolescent students (Guthrie, Alao, & Rinehart, 1997; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000 as cited in Deshler et al., 2007). Researchers caution that good adolescent literacy instruction is not just a checklist of elements, but it attends to the specific needs and challenges of the local context (Deshler et al., 2007).

Passport Reading Journeys incorporates direct, explicit instruction into a systematic framework that allows for maximum learning using a 50-minute routine with whole- group and small-group instruction that can be adapted to accommodate specific needs.

Direct, Explicit Instruction

Direct, explicit comprehension instruction is effective in helping students learn the necessary strategies to successfully understand a variety of texts (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). Direct instruction includes modeling in which the teacher reads and thinks aloud—showing students how to use strategies while reading and making thought processes transparent. Teacher modeling is followed with direct, guided practice and self-assessment, enabling students to apply the newly learned skills and strategies in a variety of texts written specifically for varying levels of reading ability.

During guided practice, students receive feedback about their initial responses followed by further opportunities to respond and practice new material correctly. After a skill is mastered, sufficient review is necessary to ensure that students maintain facility with newly acquired reading skills (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarver, 2004). When these features of instruction are a consistent part of daily lessons, student progress is at its highest.

Instructional Routine and Differentiation

As classrooms become more diverse, teachers need to vary their grouping practices during reading instruction. Teachers can meet the needs of all students by careful use of a variety of grouping practices, including whole-class instruction, teacher and peer-led small group instruction, paring and peer tutoring, and one-on-one instruction (Vaughn, Hughes, Moody, and Elbaum, 2001).

An alternate two-day routine sets the foundation for grouping and differentiating instruction in *Passport Reading Journeys*. The first of the two days is whole-group format. This model provides a forum for a motivating introduction of the topic and the instructional text, as well as explicit instruction in Advanced Word Study, vocabulary, and comprehension needed by the majority of the students. The second day includes whole-group review of the first-day instruction and the opportunity to reread the passage to build fluency. Independent or small-group structured practice, including writing in response to reading, allows the teacher to work intensively with some of the students while others complete learning tasks in small groups or independently. The second day's flexible routine provides teachers the opportunity to work with a smaller group of students who may need intensive instruction in decoding and word recognition using the *Word Study Teacher's Guide*.

Two-week unit assessments ensure that students have learned and help teachers determine their students' response to the intervention. Reteaching lessons follow each of these formative assessments so that teachers can immediately address group weaknesses or individual difficulties, then reassess to ensure mastery.

In addition to the two-day routine and formative assessment, two other resources provide teachers the flexibility to deliver small-group instruction: *Passport Reading Journeys* Library and Strategic Online Learning Opportunities® (SOLO®). The *Passport Reading Journeys* Library has multiple levels of independent reading selections, which give teachers a range of materials to effectively accommodate students' diverse learning rates in their classrooms. Paired fluency reading and the structured comprehension activities included in the Library engage students in meaningful reading practice while teachers work with individuals or small groups. SOLO also delivers an effective and engaging resource for differentiation through self-paced instruction in research- based comprehension strategies. While alternate groups work on SOLO, the teacher can provide small-group instruction for students who demonstrate difficulties (Kim, Vaughn, Klingner, Woodruff, Klein Reutebuch, Kouzekanani, 2006; Klingner, Vaughn, Arguelles, Hughes, & Leftwich, 2004; Klingner & Vaughn, 2000).

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Word Study

Word study is an integral part of reading instruction for most older readers with reading difficulties. Research demonstrates that older readers can improve reading outcomes when taught flexible word recognition strategies and word analysis (Scammacca et al., 2007). A recent review of the research in this area found a moderate overall effect for word study intervention across both standardized and researcher-developed measures of word reading and reading comprehension for older students with reading disabilities ($g = .60$) (Scammacca et al., 2007).

Many struggling readers in middle and high school may need strategic tutoring in the word study skills they did not master in the early grades. *Passport Reading Journeys* addresses the word study needs of the students in two ways. The students with the lowest word reading ability are taught with an intensive thirty-lesson word study program, beginning with a review of single letter-sound correspondences. These explicit word study lessons may be provided prior to implementing the first Expedition of *Passport Reading Journeys* or on alternate days once the intervention sequence has begun.

All intervention students who are not reading at grade level receive continued systematic and explicit instruction in practices that teach them to be flexible decoders, with particular attention to the study of multisyllabic words and unfamiliar technical terminology, as well as systematic practice in reading fluently. Explicit lessons in Advanced Word Study are incorporated into alternate lessons of the *Passport Reading Journeys* curriculum. The lessons provide instruction in affixes, sight words, decoding multisyllabic words, spelling, and word or phrase fluency. Intensive instruction in this pre-requisite skill set can be delivered to individuals, small groups, or the whole class as needed.

Of course, while word study may be an essential feature of reading instruction for older students, it is unlikely to be sufficient, and thus an integrated approach to reading includes fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and motivational enablers.

Fluency

Fluency instruction is an often forgotten component of reading instruction. Fluency involves the accurate reading of text with appropriate speed and prosody. Effective fluency instruction begins with explicit instruction on rate, accuracy, and expression followed by the teacher modeling the first reading of a passage. *Passport Reading Journeys* provides daily fluency building and scaffolds the levels of fluency support through choral reading and partner reading, gradually relinquishing the responsibility for the first reading to the individual student. Each alternate lesson provides a specific time for rereading text as well as opportunities for feedback from peers or the teacher. SOLO helps students improve fluency in high-interest passages at one of three instructional levels, depending on the student's assessed reading level. In each SOLO session, timed readings motivate and challenge students to set goals and improve their rate while monitoring their own progress. Additional opportunities to improve fluency are provided in the *Passport Reading Journeys* Library, where students read self-selected texts. Audio books, which are included as supplements in the *Passport Reading Journeys* Library and the SOLO Expeditions, provide models of prosody and additional fluency support.

Since fluency is composed of accurate word reading, reasonable speed, and prosody, it is also a critical element of reading instruction for older students.

A recent synthesis of fluency interventions with older students with reading difficulties, (Wexler, Vaughn, Edmonds, and Reutebuch; in press) located 19 studies published between 1980 and 2005. Findings from these studies indicated that fluency outcomes were most consistently improved when interventions included passage previewing such as listening to an audiotape or adult model of good reading before attempting to read a passage. Also, the studies indicated that repeated reading with older readers may not be more beneficial than continuous reading for increasing reading speed, word recognition, and comprehension. Older readers may require opportunities for both repeated reading and continuous reading. Some of the benefits of repeated reading include opportunities to improve accuracy and speed of reading, opportunities to hear text read by a model, and, through appropriate repeated reading, the chance to focus on understanding text. Some of the benefits of continuous reading may include additional exposure to text, potentially improving knowledge and vocabulary. For greater benefits, it may be useful to pair repeated reading with the application of effective comprehension strategies such as asking students to write the main idea or generate questions related to the text they are reading. While reading repeatedly and wide reading may be important elements of a comprehensive intervention for older struggling readers, they are unlikely to be sufficient–– thus, effective instruction would also more directly address vocabulary and concept development as well as comprehension.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary and verbal knowledge play increasingly important roles in supporting reading comprehension as students move from elementary to middle to high school (Schatschneider, Buck, Torgesen, Wagner, Hassler, Hecht, et al., 2004). Vocabulary and concept development are of particular importance for older readers and English language learners. The increasing demands of the text as students reach upper-grade levels require a high level of concept knowledge in addition to the acquisition of many new words.

Effective vocabulary instruction includes direct, explicit instruction in the meaning of high-frequency words, multiple meaning words, and terms that are critical to students understanding of the academic content (Marzano, 2004). Knowledge of word parts integrated with the use of word context is necessary for the optimal success of all students. When word part and context-use instruction are provided to middle-grade students in an integrated manner, it enables them to derive the meanings of novel words that contain prefixes and

suffixes that they have been taught (Baumann, Font, Edwards, & Boland, 2005). Through repeated application of these strategies, multiple exposures to useful words, promotion of word consciousness, and instruction in word categories and comparisons such as synonyms and antonyms, students recognize, understand, and make connections among words (Baker et al., 2004; Beck et al., 2002).

Passport Reading Journeys addresses vocabulary instruction as the research suggests, using explicit instruction of word meanings and development of strategies to determine unknown words through morpheme analysis. A carefully planned sequence of vocabulary skills and multiple exposures of high-utility words is skillfully meshed within the passages, comprehension activities, and text discussions. Affixes and roots are explicitly taught to students in a sequential pattern that is supported by the identified words in the passages. Students collect words in *Passport Reading Journeys* Vocabulary Logs for use in writing and class activities. In SOLO, multiple tools help students determine word meaning and contextual use in the passages with carefully crafted computer enhancements.

As new words are introduced, student-friendly definitions and examples provide learning with a strong foundation upon which to extend their understanding in word analysis activities. The word analysis practice activities include those methods proven effective in students' comprehension and retention of new vocabulary words (Beck et al., 2002; Graves, 2006). These methods include listing examples and non-examples of the word, making word associations, creating semantic maps, using a semantic feature analysis, and other word-consciousness activities.

Comprehension instruction must be explicit and strategic and must include attention to metacognitive development.

Comprehension Strategies

For many adolescent readers, the primary obstacle to successful literacy is understanding and learning from text. Comprehension instruction must be explicit and strategic and must include attention to metacognitive development. Students must be taught critical strategies systematically, understand why they are important, and know how, when, and where to apply them.

Passport Reading Journeys uses research-based comprehension instruction for middle school students. A set of priority strategies, adapted from reciprocal teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984) and Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) (Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007) helps students comprehend text. These priority strategies are previewing, vocabulary, main idea, and summarization. The strategic set incorporates teaching students how to generate questions as well as how to think inferentially. Comprehension skills are taught explicitly in the *Passport Reading Journeys* curriculum and applied to expository passages both in the classroom and in SOLO. Students also study organizational text features that serve as frames for important information and logical links between important ideas. Explicit instruction in text structures teaches students to adjust comprehension strategies according to the text they are reading. Text structures include sequence, compare/contrast, cause/effect, and problem/solution.

To improve student understanding and learning during and after reading, comprehension instruction should activate prior knowledge; engage students in thinking while they read, self-questioning, and monitoring their understanding; and provide strategic use of instructional practices. In a synthesis of reading comprehension interventions with older readers with reading disabilities, Scammacca et al. (2007) reported the effects from 12 studies with an overall effect size of $g = 1.35$.

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Metacognition

Another critical attribute of *Passport Reading Journeys* instruction is the emphasis on metacognition as a support for reading comprehension. Students develop an awareness and understanding of how to think and use strategies during reading. Teachers explicitly model metacognitive processes through think-alouds in whole-group sessions. From modeling, instruction progresses to independent practice where students respond to questions about using the strategies they learn. Strategies are taught with intensity and deliberation, and students receive ample opportunities to practice applying them to varied, interesting text in print and online.

Student- and Teacher-Generated Questions

In *Passport Reading Journeys*, both teacher-generated and student-generated questioning practices are scaffolded throughout instruction so that maximizing students' understanding and learning from text occurs. Launching students into text through interesting and engaging previewing activities enables them to want to read. Instruction on vocabulary and key concepts provides adequate background and word knowledge to profit from what they read, and smart questioning from both teachers and students provides for extending understanding of what was read and making connections with other texts.

In *Passport Reading Journeys*, the teacher's questions during and after reading are carefully scaffolded. In the first reading of the selection, the teacher asks comprehension questions to ensure understanding and to model the metacognitive process of self- monitoring. After students complete a first read of the selection, the teacher asks critical thinking questions that reflect the various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. This teacher-directed questioning carefully integrates with student-generated questions as both a key reading comprehension strategy during reading and a way for students to monitor and deepen their understanding of the text.

Listening Comprehension

Each *Passport Reading Journeys* Expedition provides multiple opportunities for students to employ effective listening and speaking techniques. Students engage in interactive comprehension activities supported by explicit listening and speaking skill instruction. As students build on the author's ideas, they practice listening and speaking skills. Expository text structures provide students with a framework for their oral presentations.

Perhaps one of the most essential features of improving listening comprehension is the provision of engaging and interesting text and activities related to that text so students are eager to learn.

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Motivating Content

As students progress from elementary school, to middle school, to high school, motivation to read often diminishes (Guthrie & Davis, 2003), and it becomes even more important for teachers to link motivational and instructional practices (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). In addition students who are less motivated to read are usually less engaged with their text while they are reading (Torgesen et al, 2007).

Passport Reading Journeys is designed to reverse this disturbing trend by providing motivating print and media that increase literacy. Video segments before and after each *Passport Reading Journeys* Expedition present thought-provoking content that provides background knowledge and creates a foundation for understanding. Each segment is hosted by a teen who poses probing questions, highlights essential content-area vocabulary words, makes relevant connections to students' lives, and engages students in thinking about topics as far-ranging as wireless technologies, microscopic dangers, and money management. Such diverse topics make the curriculum and instruction relevant to adolescents' experiences, cultures, and long-term goals (Board on Children, Youth, and Families, 2003). Thus, with the *Passport Reading Journeys* materials, students are motivated to read and apply the skills they are learning.

In *Passport Reading Journeys*, the primarily nonfiction selections have been field-tested for high interest with middle school and high school students, and reach across the curriculum to foster literacy development. One of the most successful features is that the characters, content, and activities target students who represent diverse cultural and linguistic groups. Children who are traditionally marginalized in many instructional programs will find text, instruction, and characters with whom they can relate.

Integration of Content-Area Text

Learning to read efficiently in a content area requires skills that differ from those that are necessary for learning to read and analyze literature (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). *Passport Reading Journeys* includes a variety of texts and appropriate strategies for reading content-area texts.

In the science and social studies readings in *Passport Reading Journeys*, students are explicitly taught key text structures found in informational texts: sequencing (including how-to), compare/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution, and persuasion. Students analyze these text structures that parallel those found in the content-area classes through guided practice that includes writing in these formats. Informational illustrations, photos, charts, graphs, maps, and time-lines capture students' attention and enhance comprehension.

Critical science and social studies concepts featured in the reading selections are then deepened through interactive activities. These engaging activities help students make concrete connections to abstract historical or scientific information. Career-based activities suggested by the Expedition topics inspire students to imagine themselves in stimulating and rewarding jobs in the future.

Collaborative Learning with Text

Collaborative learning is at the heart of the instructional routine of *Passport Reading Journeys*. Students work in groups and pairs to recognize text structures and features, make predictions, generate questions, and discuss what they have read—all leading to a better understanding of expository and narrative texts. The collaborative learning activities are aligned with the explicit vocabulary and comprehension instruction provided throughout the program (Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998; Klingner & Vaughn, 2000; Klingner et al., 2004).

Further, English language learners benefit from the opportunities to work with others, have instruction modeled by teachers and technology, and extended opportunities to practice with feedback.

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Strategic Tutoring

Targeted small-group instruction can help accelerate students' reading growth due to the increased intensity of instruction. Reading instruction provided in small groups allows teachers to target the specific needs of struggling readers and provides students with additional opportunities to practice applying new skills and strategies. Each Expedition in *Passport Reading Journeys* allows regular opportunities for teachers to provide small-group instruction with teacher-led targeted skills review. During this time, other students engage in stimulating independent work or use computer stations for independent practice at their reading levels.

A Reteach lesson following each Expedition allows teachers to address the needs of individual students in comprehension and vocabulary. Additional guided practice and assessment enables teachers to closely monitor student improvement.

Diverse Texts

Older students with reading difficulties are often disinterested in reading because they are accustomed to being provided text they cannot read and text they do not want to read. *Passport Reading Journeys* solves both of these problems by providing texts that are age appropriate, topic appropriate and engaging and mature yet related to the developmental and educational needs of older readers. These texts are designed to engage struggling readers and provide the daily practice required to improve reading outcomes (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).

Student reading material in *Passport Reading Journeys* includes a wide range of topics on different reading levels as determined by the Lexile® Framework for Reading. In *Passport Reading Journeys*, the variety of topics and readability ranges offer students a considerable degree of choice, which is important to ongoing engagement and motivation (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Student Anthology passages are scaffolded in length and difficulty as students acquire the skills to access increasingly complex text.

SOLO passages parallel the topics in the curriculum and are also scaffolded in length and difficulty, providing the incremental challenges necessary for growth. Each passage in SOLO is offered in three Lexile levels to ensure that students have text that is matched to their assessed reading level. The *Passport Reading Journeys* Library also provides a wide variety of Lexile-leveled texts for self-selected reading. Multiple copies of eight fiction books are available for students' independent, partner, or small-group reading activities. Twenty magazines in sets focusing on topics in science and social studies significantly expand student choice.

Writing instruction includes a focus on generating ideas, elaboration, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

Writing

Students need to develop proficiency in basic writing skills as well as in reading. While no single approach to teaching writing will meet the needs of all students, research suggests that specific techniques such as teaching writing strategies, summarization, and collaborative writing will produce the best results (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Passport Reading Journeys includes a two-fold approach to writing. One component is writing in response to reading, which helps students check their understanding, reinforces returning to the text for more information, and sharpens critical thinking skills. Every Expedition in *Passport Reading Journeys* integrates writing practice and instruction targeted to support the reading process.

The second writing component in *Passport Reading Journeys* is a writing lesson at the end of each Expedition that extends the comprehension skills and content into a writing topic. These lessons are designed to help students develop writing proficiency essential for success in many content-area classes. Students learn to apply qualities of good writing to their sentences, paragraphs, and short compositions. Writing instruction includes a focus on generating ideas, elaboration, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. Paragraph writing is stressed, and multi-paragraph writing and research writing skills are also addressed. Lessons employ explicit instruction, models of effective writing, and lesson-specific rubrics to enable self- and peer-evaluation. The text structures that students explore and compose within the writing lessons are directly aligned with the text structures inherent in the genres they are reading and analyzing.

Passport Reading Journeys integrates the research findings from the most recent meta- analysis on effective writing practices (Graham & Perin, 2007) into the instructional routines. Findings from the Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools (Graham & Perin, 2007) show that the following instructional practices––included explicitly in the *Passport Reading Journeys* instruction– –are associated with improved writing outcomes with older students.

- **Writing Strategies** *(ES=0.82)*. Teaching students effective writing strategies explicitly, such as planning, revising, brainstorming, and editing, are associated with overall large effects. These practices are particularly helpful for students struggling with writing.
- **Summarization** *(ES=0.82)*. Summarizing through writing, whether taught through rule-generation or intuitively, yields large effects for students. The practice of summarizing is associated with both high effects in reading and writing. Summarizing is an essential strategic practice in *Passport Reading Journeys* taught through reading text and writing.
- **Collaborative Writing** *(ES=0.75)*. Working with other students in a small group to provide feedback, review, and write cooperatively is associated with improved writing.
- **Specific Product Goals** *(ES=0.70)*. Assigning students reasonable goals for improving their writing, asking students to add ideas to what they write, and providing structural elements to facilitate writing effectiveness are associated with improved writing outcomes.
- **Sentence Combining** *(ES=0.50)*. Students benefit when they are provided instruction in how to take two or more sentences and combine them into one complex sentence.

The text structures that students explore and compose within the writing lessons are directly aligned with the text structures inherent in the genres they are reading and analyzing.

Technology Application

The Alliance for Excellent Education (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004) calls for technological communication and information resources to be embedded in effective adolescent literacy teaching and learning. "Effective adolescent literacy programs therefore should use technology as both an instructional tool and an instructional topic" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, p. 19).

The rise in computer-assisted instruction (CAI) offers another venue to support and customize students' education. CAI has the potential to offer struggling readers self- paced, individualized instruction that includes immediate feedback and multiple opportunities for practice (Hall, Hughes, & Filbert, 2000; Lewis, 2000; MacArthur & Haynes, 1995; Rieth & Semmel, 1991; Woodward, Carnine, Gersten, Gleason, Johnson, & Collins, 1986). SOLO, the technology component of *Passport Reading Journeys*, optimizes that potential. In each session, students are guided on the skill path of proficient readers by animated hosts who introduce the content, provide think-alouds that review the strategies taught in the classroom, and motivate students as they apply strategies to self-selected passages.

SOLO enables students to independently practice reading skills in an interactive, Web-based format. The program provides Lexile-leveled passages for students to read and explicit instruction and practice in word learning and comprehension strategies taught in the curriculum. Supports for independent reading include automated clues or prompts and vocabulary resources. The program also allows students to assess their fluency as they read a passage, review vocabulary words in a game format, and practice on skills in a standardized test format. Practice sessions have real-time measures with automatic feedback for teachers. SOLO also connects students to additional technology resources for supplemental self-selected reading.

Student placement and progress monitoring are determined through reliable and valid measures of reading.

Assessment and Progress Monitoring

In addition to explicit, systematic instruction in each of the reading components, effective instruction for struggling readers must be responsive to students' ongoing needs and must include a variety of continuous assessments to guide additional instruction (Deshler, Shumaker, & Woodruff, 2004). *Passport Reading Journeys* includes a comprehensive system of assessment and progress monitoring to ensure ongoing effective instruction. Student placement and progress monitoring are determined through reliable and valid measures of reading. The *Passport Reading Journeys* comprehensive assessment system includes the Reading Benchmark, Vital Indicators of Progress® (VIP®), progress monitoring, end-of-Expedition assessments, and student self- assessments.

The Reading Benchmark, one of the primary measures in the assessment system, is powered by the Lexile Framework® for Reading. This assessment, administered three times during the school year, measures reading to gain information and is provided in both an online or paper version. Results from the Reading Benchmark comprehension measure are used to place students in one of three text levels in SOLO or in the appropriate independent reading material in the *Passport Reading Journeys* Library, as well as to measure and monitor students' growth.

Standardized oral-fluency probes in Voyager's VIP measure fluency at three benchmarks. Reading Connected Text (RCT) is a 1-minute, individually administered oral reading measure. The RCT benchmark measures help to target students who may require additional support to increase the range of words they can recognize at a single glance (sight words) in order to continue to meet grade-level fluency expectations (Torgesen & Hudson, 2006). RCT progress monitoring measures ensure that students stay on an upward trajectory toward fluency goals. Helping students become fluent readers is absolutely critical for proficient and motivated reading, but it is also important to remember that fluency is only one of the essential skills in reading and fluency goals must be reasonable (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006).

Comprehension and vocabulary assessments at the end of each 10-lesson unit or Expedition provide teachers with an understanding of how well students have learned the content and strategies in that unit of study. Assessments at the end of each SOLO session provide teachers with information on how well independent readers perform when applying strategies to new text. These assessments can be used to determine and record grades periodically.

More information about the Reading Benchmark, the Lexile assessment, is available at www.voyagerlearning.com. The *Passport Reading Journeys* Benchmark Assessments Development and Technical Guide is located in the White Papers sections under the "Evidence of Effectiveness" tab.

Sample lessons of *Passport Reading Journeys* are available at www.voyagerlearning.com. Click on the *Passport Reading Journeys* box, and then choose Lesson Samplers.

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