



DYSLEXIA and Structured Literacy Connections



Introduction

Voyager Passport® is a targeted, small-group, evidence-based literacy intervention that applies elements and principles of the Structured Literacy approach of teaching reading for all students; including those who struggle and have been identified with dyslexia. *Voyager Passport* is designed to meet the specialized needs of students reading below grade level; serving students with a variety of educational challenges: low achievers, students with disabilities, and English language learners. The interactive, explicit, and systematic delivery of phonology, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension with embedded oral language, language, and writing provides a supportive instructional routine for teachers and students. Opportunities for diagnostic teaching and differentiation are embedded through immediate, corrective feedback and considerations for individual student needs within every lesson. Ongoing, formative assessments also provide teachers with insights for re-teaching and differentiating for critical elements of need.

Voyager Passport was created to support students with a variety of needs and follows the approach to reading instruction supported by the [International Dyslexia Association® \(IDA\)](#), benefiting students with dyslexic tendencies. IDA published a fact sheet about [Effective Reading Instruction](#) in 2017 that outlines approaches to teaching students with dyslexia to read. IDA reports what works best is Structured Literacy, “which prepares students to decode words in an explicit and systematic manner” (“Effective Reading Instruction—International Dyslexia Association,” 2017). Structured Literacy was the approach unanimously chosen by the IDA Board of Directors that would include, not replace, all evidence-based approaches to reading instruction that conform to [IDA’s Knowledge and Practice Standards](#) (Malchow, 2014).

Content and Delivery

“It is clear from the consensus of scientifically based reading research that the nature of the educational intervention for individuals with reading disabilities and dyslexia is critical. Characterizing reading and writing as language is central to every aspect of intervention for individuals with language-based learning disabilities. Knowledge of language development and disabilities is essential for those who administer assessments and interpret them, deliver instruction, and design and carry out programs at all levels (Dickman, Hennessy, Moats, Rooney, & Tomey, 2002).” (Birsh, 2018, p. 22)

Intensity of Instruction

“From 25 years of prevention and intervention research targeting the five major components of reading, Torgesen (2004) concluded that explicitness and intensity of instruction are the key ingredients in teaching this knowledge and these skills to students who are struggling with reading. He clarified that “explicit instruction is instruction that does not leave anything to chance and does not make assumptions about skills and knowledge that children will acquire on their own” (2004, p. 363).” (Birsh, 2018, p. 25)

“To make gains, students need to engage in highly structured, sequential activities and be closely monitored in ways that are not possible in the general education classroom. They need to form direct connections between the known and the new, and they need time for explicit practice to build automaticity and fluency. In addition, the curriculum needs a sequential order for instruction and practice.” (Birsh, 2018, p. 25)

Voyager Passport incorporates all components of instruction and instructional approaches from the International Dyslexia Association’s (IDA’s) Structured Literacy Approach to teaching reading.

IDA: Effective Reading Instruction for Students with Dyslexia



Elements: Phonology

“Phonology is the study of sound structure of spoken words and is a critical element of Structured Language instruction. Phonological awareness includes rhyming, counting words in a spoken sentence, and clapping syllables in spoken words. An important aspect of phonological awareness is phonemic awareness or the ability to segment words into their component sounds, which are called phonemes. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds in the language. For example, the word *cap* has three phonemes (/k/, /ă/, /p/), and the word *clasp* has five phonemes (/k/, /l/, /ă/, /s/, /p/).” (IDA, 2015, p. 1)

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NOTE: To view examples from Levels B, C & E access eBooks in the Voyager Passport Digital Sample.

Daily instruction includes phonological awareness activities during the Word Works portion of the daily lesson with more emphasis in the lower grades, according to essential priority needs. *Voyager Passport* follows an evidence-based, sequential progression of phonological skills from syllable counting, rhyming, and alliteration to identifying individual phonemes for blending and segmenting the spoken word.

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

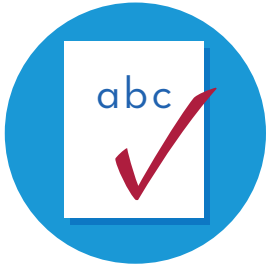
- Level A: A11 L4 Word Works
 - Phonological Awareness—Onset Rime Manipulation
 - Phonemic Awareness—Middle Vowel Substitution
- Level B: A5 L4 Word Works
 - Phonological Awareness—Syllable Blending
 - Phonemic Awareness—Onset Rime Blending
- Level C: A1 L9 Word Works
 - Phonemic Awareness—Phoneme Blending

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level A: A5 L6 Word Works
 - Phonological Awareness—Syllable Deletion
 - Phonemic Awareness—Phoneme Segmentation



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Elements: Sound-symbol association/Orthography

“Once students have developed the awareness of phonemes of spoken language, they must learn how to map the phonemes to symbols or printed letters. Sound-symbol association must be taught and mastered in two directions: visual to auditory (reading) and auditory to visual (spelling). Additionally, students must master the blending of sounds and letters into words as well as the segmenting of whole words into the individual sounds. The instruction of sound-symbol associations is often referred to as phonics. Although phonics is a component of Structured Literacy, it is embedded within a rich and deep language context.” (IDA, 2015, p. 1)



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Explicit, teacher-directed instruction through the systematic teach, model, and probe-and-guided practice approach introduces sound-symbol letter combinations to build the foundation for word reading across all six levels. A progression from individual sounds, blends, digraphs, and vowel teams to unusual sound combinations provides a sequential development of skills. Repeated, cumulative practice builds automaticity of word recognition and word patterns in the English language. Immediate, corrective feedback provides a redirect of instruction and confirmation for accuracy and additional practice. Daily instruction in Word Works includes the study of specific spelling patterns across all six levels beginning with the simplest VC and CVC pattern words and word families. Spelling rules and inflectional endings are cumulatively taught based on the sequence of sound-symbol introduction. Regular pattern words and irregular Sight Words are explicitly taught and cumulatively reviewed to build automaticity in word reading.

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

- Level A: A11 L4 Word Works
 - Word Reading—CVC & CVCC Words
 - Spelling—CVC and CVCC Words
- Level B: A5 L4 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Introduce Words with *th, wh, ch*
 - Word Families—Introduce *-ish, -ap*
- Level C: A1 L9 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Introduce Words with *-ck*
 - Word Families—Words with *-ick, -ack, -ock*
- Level D: A2 L6 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Words with *-oy, -ai*
 - Word Reading—Multisyllabic Words: Closed Syllables
- Level E: A5 L3 Word Works
 - 2-Minute Warm-Up—Words with *ou*
 - Advanced Word Study—Compound Words
- Level F: A3 L7 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Words with *ew, ph, er*
 - Word Building—Words with *-s, -ed, -ing*

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level A: A5 L1 Word Works
 - Phonics—Blending and Segmenting
 - Word Reading—VC and CVC Words
- Level D: A2 L2 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Words with Soft *c* and Soft *g*
 - Spelling—Words with Soft *c* and Soft *g*
- Level F: A7 L6 Word Works
 - 2-Minute Warm-Up—Words with *er*
 - Advanced Word Study—Prefix: *non-*

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Elements: Syllable Instruction

“A syllable is a unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. Instruction includes teaching of the six basic syllable types in the English language: closed, vowel-consonant-e, open, consonant-le, r-controlled, and vowel pair. Knowledge of syllable types is an important organizing idea. By knowing the syllable type, the reader can better determine the sound of the vowel in the syllable. Syllable division rules heighten the reader’s awareness of where a long, unfamiliar word may be divided for great accuracy in reading the word.” (IDA, 2015, p. 1)

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Word Study continues across all six levels of *Voyager Passport*. The sequential progression of skills builds and shifts to an emphasis on word parts/syllables through the systematic teach, model, and probe-and-guided practice approach. Consistent practice and reinforcement opportunities are embedded in every lesson for word reading fluency and to build automaticity.

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

- Level B: A5 L4 Word Works
 - Phonological Awareness—Syllable blending
- Level D: A2 L6 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Multisyllabic Words: Closed Syllables
- Level D: A2 L10 Word Works
 - Differentiated Instruction Day 1 Activity 2: Word Reading Open Syllables
- Level E: A3 L8 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Multisyllabic Words: Consonant *le*

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level A: A5 L7 Word Works
 - Phonological Awareness—Syllable Deletion
- Level D: A2 L7 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Multisyllabic Words: Closed Syllables
 - Spelling—Multisyllabic Words: Closed Syllables



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Elements: Morphology

“A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in the language. The Structured Literacy curriculum includes the study of base words, roots, prefixes, and suffixes. The word *instructor*, for example, contains the root *struct*, which means to *build*, the prefix *in*, which means *in* or *into*, and the suffix *or*, which means *one who*. An instructor is one who builds knowledge in his or her students.” (IDA, 2015, p. 1)

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Morphology instruction is integrated into the daily Word Works routine of instruction. Advanced Word Study begins in Levels C–F (grades 2–5) with explicit, direct instruction using the systematic teach, model, and probe-and-guided practice approach. Prefixes, suffixes, and Greek combining forms are incrementally introduced and cumulatively reviewed for accurate and automatic word reading of multisyllabic words.

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

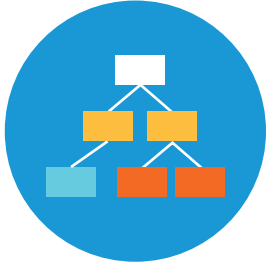
- Levels A–B
 - *Begins in Levels C–F
- Level C: A3 L9 Word Works
 - Advanced Word Study—Prefix *in-*
- Level E: A8 L5 Differentiated Instruction
 - Day 1 Activity 1: Advanced Word Study
- Level F: A3 L7 Word Works
 - Word Building—Words with *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level F: A7 L1 Word Works
 - Advanced Word Study—Prefix: *pre-*
- Level F: A7 L5 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 1—Advanced Word Study



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Elements: Syntax

“Syntax is the set of principles that dictate the sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar, sentence variation, and the mechanics of language.” (IDA, 2015, p. 1)



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Grammar concepts are embedded within the Listen to Understand/Reading to Understand routine of instruction. The function of words within sentences and accurate word usage is directly taught to support comprehension and writing.

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

- Level A: A11 Adventure Starter
 - Probing Question
- Level B: A4 L7 Read to Understand
 - Before Reading Vocabulary—Identify and Use Descriptive Language
 - Vocabulary—Descriptive Words (Adjectives)
- Level C: A9 L7 Read to Understand
 - Before Reading—Vocabulary
- Level D: A2 L4 Read to Understand
 - Before Reading—Activate Prior Knowledge
- Level E: A7 L9 Word Works
 - Advanced Word Study—Review Homophones
- Level F: A3 L3 Practice
 - Language—Correlative Conjunctions

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level A: A5 L7 Listen to Understand
 - Vocabulary—Recall
- Level D: A2 L7 Word Works
 - Word Reading—Contractions
- Level F: A7 L3 Word Works
 - Advanced Word Study—Antonyms

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Elements: Semantics

“Semantics is that aspect of language concerned with meaning. The curriculum (from the beginning) must include instruction in comprehending written language.” (IDA, 2015, p. 1)

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NOTE: To view examples from Levels B, C & E access eBooks in the Voyager Passport Digital Sample.

Voyager Passport’s Listen to Understand/Read to Understand routines include direct, explicit pre-teaching of vocabulary prior to reading. Multiple exposures, review, and practice of targeted vocabulary across Adventure Units provide multiple opportunities for word usage and application across all Levels of instruction (A–F Grades K–5).

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

- Level A: A11 L9 Practice
 - Vocabulary—Concept Development
- Level B: A5 L4 Read to Understand
 - Before Reading—Vocabulary: Multiple Meaning Words
- Level C: A2 L3 Read to Understand
 - Before Reading—Vocabulary: Story Words
- Level D: A2 L6 Read to Understand
 - Before Reading—Vocabulary Introduction
- Level E: A3 L3 Read to Understand
 - Before Reading—Vocabulary Introduction
- Level F: A3 L4 Practice
 - Vocabulary—Definitions

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level A: A5 L7 Listen to Understand
 - Vocabulary—Recall
- Level D: A2 L6 Practice
 - Vocabulary—Word Associations
- Level F: A7 L1 Read to Understand
 - During Reading—Vocabulary: Context Clues



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Principles: Systematic and Cumulative

“Structured Literacy instruction is systematic and cumulative. Systematic means that the organization of material follows the logical order of the language. The sequence must begin with the easiest and most basic concepts and elements and progress methodically to more difficult concepts and elements. Cumulative means each step must be based on concepts previously learned.” (IDA, 2015, p. 2)

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Cumulative Review

Voyager Passport’s systematic introduction of priority concepts and ongoing review of previously taught elements is key to its design. New concepts are integrated into previously learned materials, so students receive continual practice and reinforcement.

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

- Level D: A2 L1 Word Works
 - Letter and Sound Identification—Introduce *au*
 - Word Reading—Words with *au*
 - Spelling—Words with *au*
- Level D: A2 L5 Adventure Checkpoint
 - Word Works—Letter and Sound Identification
- Level D: A2 L5 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 1—Letter and Sound Identification

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level F: A7 L8 Word Works
 - Advanced Word Study—Homophones
- Level F: A7 L9 Word Works
 - Advanced Word Study—Review Homophones
- Level F: A7 L10 Adventure Checkpoint
 - Word Works—Advanced Word Study
- Level F: A7 L10 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 1—Advanced Word Study



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Principles: Explicit Instruction

“Structured Literacy instruction requires the deliberate teaching of all concepts with continuous student-teacher interaction. It is not assumed that students will naturally deduce these concepts on their own.” (IDA, 2015, p. 2)

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Voyager Passport’s Word Works and Listen to Understand/Read to Understand routines follow a framework of explicit instruction. The elements of phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, are directly taught during Word Works instructions.

Syntax and semantics are embedded during the Listen to Understand/Read to Understand routine. Explicit instruction for making connections to new concepts through predictions and inferences, and the unlocking of vocabulary as words convey meaning and ideas. The Before Reading, During Reading, and After Reading format provides interactive engagement opportunities as teachers model “Think Alouds.” With guided support, students practice comprehension strategies to gain meaning from text.

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

- Level A: A11 L1 Adventure Starter
- Level C: A8 L6 Word Works
 - Phonological Awareness—Sound Isolation
 - Advanced Word Study—Suffixes *-less* and *-ness*
- Level D: A2 L10 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 2 Word Reading
- Level F: A3 L5 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 2—Multisyllabic Words

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level A: A5 L5 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 3—Phonemic Awareness
- Level D: A2 L1 Read to Understand
 - During Reading—Read for a Purpose
- Level F: A7 L3 Read to Understand
 - During Reading—Teacher Read-Aloud



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Principles: Diagnostic Teaching

“The teacher must be adept at individualized instruction. That is instruction that meets a student’s needs. The instruction is based on careful and continuous assessment, both informally (for example, observation) and formally (for example, with standardized measures.) The content presented must be mastered to the degree of automaticity. Automaticity is critical to freeing all the student’s attention and cognitive resources for comprehension and expression.” (IDA, 2015, p. 2)



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Voyager Passport’s daily instructional routines are embedded with callouts of specialized support for students of diverse needs and corrective procedures with feedback at point of use. The instructional map includes ongoing formative Adventure Checkpoints every five lessons. These formative assessments are built into the instructional flow of *Voyager Passport* to quickly measure student proficiency of skills and strategies taught. Teachers can use this data to make instructional decisions for differentiation. Differentiated Instruction lessons allow teachers to make individualized instructional decisions through activity selections based on targeted need. Additional opportunities to extend student learning are included in the Practice section for each Adventure.

Voyager Passport Print Sampler Examples:

- Level A: A11 L10 Adventure Checkpoint
 - Word Works—Phonemic Awareness: Initial, Medial, and Final Sounds
- Level A: A11 L10 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 1—Phonemic Awareness: Initial, Medial, and Final Sounds
- Level D: A2 L10 Adventure Checkpoint
 - Read to Understand—Comprehension
- Level D: A2 L10 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 3—Comprehension
- Level F: A3 L10 Adventure Checkpoint
 - Word Works—Word Building
- Level F: A3 L10 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 2—Word Building

Voyager Passport Digital Sample Examples:

- Level A: A5 L5 Adventure Checkpoint
 - Word Works—Phonemic Awareness: Blending Sounds to Words
- Level A: A5 L5 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 3—Phonemic Awareness: Blending Sounds to Words
- Level D: A2 L5 Adventure Checkpoint
 - Read to Understand—Comprehension
- Level D: A2 L5 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 4—Comprehension
- Level F: A7 L5 Adventure Checkpoint
 - Word Works—Advanced Word Study
- Level F: A7 L5 Differentiated Instruction
 - Activity 1—Advanced Word Study

REFERENCES

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