WWC Intervention Report U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

What Works Clearinghouse



Students with Learning Disabilities

March 2010

Voyager Reading Programs

Effectiveness¹

No studies of the *Voyager* reading programs (*Voyager Passport*™, *Voyager Passport* Reading Journeys™, and *Voyager Universal Literacy System*®) that fall within the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of *Voyager* reading programs on students with learning disabilities.

Program Descriptions²

Voyager Passport[™] is a supplemental reading intervention system for students in grades K–5. The program integrates five components of reading (phonemic awareness, letter-sound recognition, word reading, sight words, and vocabulary) into a 30–40 minute instructional routine. An assessment and data management system is integrated into the intervention, allowing teachers to monitor progress and differentiate instruction. The program provides instruction, corrective feedback, and practice time in a small group setting. Each level of Voyager Passport[™] consists of 120 lessons that are divided into ten-day units called Adventures.

Voyager Passport Reading Journeys[™] is a reading intervention program designed for adolescents who struggle with reading. The program incorporates direct, explicit instruction into a systematic 50-minute routine with whole-group and small-group

instruction. The program provides instruction in comprehension, vocabulary, and word study using fiction and non-fiction texts based on age-appropriate science and social studies topics. Assessments are embedded in the curriculum to enable teachers to monitor progress and differentiate instruction. The program offers four levels of instruction appropriate for middle and high school. Each level includes 120 lessons that are divided into ten-day units called Expeditions that focus on topics related to science or social studies. Each week, students spend four days on lessons designed to build their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. They spend the fifth day online using SOLO®, an interactive online learning package.

The Voyager Universal Literacy System® is a K–3 reading program that includes a core reading curriculum; a progress monitoring system that measures each student's reading

1. The studies in this report were reviewed using WWC Evidence Standards, Version 2.0 (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Chapter III).

^{2.} The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly available source: the program's website (http://www.voyagerlearning.com, downloaded February 2010). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.

Program Description (continued)

progress and identifies struggling readers; a struggling reader intervention that includes additional instruction time and summer school; professional development for teachers, principals, and specialists; a home study curriculum; and computer-based practice and reinforcement in phonological skills, comprehension, fluency, language development, and writing. The program

uses individual reading instruction, higher-level comprehension activities, problem solving, and writing, as well as whole classroom, small group, and independent group settings. The program emphasizes regular assessments, with biweekly reviews for struggling students and quarterly assessments for all students.

The WWC identified 44 studies of *Voyager* reading programs for students with learning disabilities that were published or released between 1989 and 2009.

This includes 33 studies of *Voyager Passport*[™], six studies of *Voyager Passport Reading Journeys*[™], and eight studies of *Voyager Universal Literacy System*[®]. The total of 47 individual studies (33 + 6 + 8) is more than the overall number of studies (44) because one study included all three programs and one study included both *Voyager Passport*[™] and *Voyager Universal Literacy Systems*[®].

Voyager Passport™. None of the 33 studies meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations. Seven studies fall within the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol but do not use a comparison group, two studies are ineligible for review because they are not primary analyses of the effectiveness of an intervention, and 24 studies are out of the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol because the sample of students does not meet protocol criteria.

Voyager Passport Reading Journeys[™]. None of the six studies meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations. All six studies are out of the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol because the sample of students does not meet protocol criteria.

Voyager Universal Literacy System®. None of the eight studies meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations. One study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, and seven studies are out of the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol because the sample of students does not meet protocol criteria.

References

Studies that fall outside the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol or do not meet evidence standards

Voyager Passport[™]

- Ajwani, S. (2008). The success of educational interventions in grades three and five in improving academic progress. (Doctoral dissertation, St. John's University, 2008). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 68(10-A), 4145. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Bell, J. N. (2008). The effects of three reading intervention programs on third grade students' reading achievement. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Louisiana at Monroe, 2008). Dissertation Abstracts International, 69(5-A), 1649. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Peyton, J. A., & Macpherson, J. R. (2008). Students receiving special education services succeed on OCCT after using Voyager Passport reading intervention. Dallas, TX: Voyager Expanded Learning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Peyton, J. A., & Macpherson, J. R. (2008). Substantial reading gains for third grade students during summer reading intervention in Sarasota County schools. Dallas, TX: Voyager Expanded Learning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Peyton, J. A., & Macpherson, J. R. (2008). Third and fifth grade students success on TAKS after using Voyager Passport reading intervention. Dallas, TX: Voyager Expanded Learning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

- Peyton, J. A., & Macpherson, J. R. (2008). Third grade students success on FCAT after using Voyager Passport reading intervention in the school district of Manatee County, Florida. Dallas, TX: Voyager Expanded Learning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Slavin, R. E., Cheung, A., Groff, C., & Lake, C. (2008). Effective reading programs for middle and high schools: A best-evidence synthesis. *Reading Research Quarterly, 43*(3), 290–322. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Additional source:

- Slavin, R. E., Cheung, A., Groff, C., & Lake, C. (2008). Effective reading programs for middle and high schools: A best evidence synthesis. Educator's summary. Retrieved February 24, 2009, from http://www.bestevidence.org.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Alabama summer reading academies significantly accelerate first-grade reading skills.

 Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Alabama summer reading academies significantly accelerate kindergarten reading skills.

 Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Alabama summer reading academies significantly accelerate second-grade reading skills. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Alabama summer reading academies significantly accelerate third-grade reading skills.

- Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Expect Results in Florida schools: A report highlighting student reading achievement.

 Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

Additional sources:

- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Crestview Elementary (FL) FCAT scores continue to increase. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). *District-wide progress* on FCAT for Miami, FL tier 2 and tier 3 students. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Larkdale Elementary (FL) ranked in top 5% of district reading first schools after Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Norwood Elementary (FL) at-risk students increase fluency with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (n.d.). *Manatee County school district achieves highest summer gains in the state of Florida*. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Expect Results in New York City schools: A report highlighting student reading achievement. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Expect Results in Texas schools: Using Voyager intervention programs that work.

 Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

Additional sources:

- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). *Texas fifth-graders increase their reading fluency with* Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). *Texas fourth-graders accelerate their reading fluency with* Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). First-graders receiving special education services at Oxford Elementary (AL) make gains in key reading skills. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Kindergartners receiving special education services at Oxford Elementary (AL) make significant gains in key reading skills. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Schools in Bowling Green, KY significantly decrease referrals to special education. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Schools in Luling, TX dramatically decrease referrals to special education. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Second-graders receiving special education services at Oxford Elementary (AL) make significant fluency gains. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Third-graders receiving special education services at Oxford Elementary (AL) make significant fluency gains. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2007). A summary of the effectiveness of Voyager reading solutions. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

Additional sources:

- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). *Crestview Elementary* (FL) FCAT scores continue to increase. Dallas, TX: Author. Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). *District-wide progress*
- on FCAT for Miami, FL tier 2 and tier 3 students. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Larkdale Elementary (FL) ranked in top 5% of district reading first schools after Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (n.d.). *Manatee County school district achieves highest summer gains in the state of Florida*. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2007). Struggling K–3 students in Georgia Reading First districts increase reading fluency with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). At-risk students in Mountain View (CA) dramatically increased their reading fluency with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). LAUSD students receiving special education services make educationally meaning-

- ful reading fluency gains with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). LAUSD third-graders receiving special education services successfully increase key reading skills with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). Los Angeles (CA) fifthgraders receiving special education services dramatically increase fluency with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). Los Angeles (CA) fourthgraders receiving special education services make big gains in reading fluency with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). Middle school students in Lake Elsinore (CA) gain ground in reading with Voyager Passport.

 Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). Newport-Mesa (CA) fourth and fifth-graders make dramatic gains in reading fluency with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). Palmdale (CA) students receiving special education services dramatically increase reading fluency rates with Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX:

 Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). Reading fluency rates soar for LAUSD secondary students after just three months in Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). Significant gains in reading fluency made by LAUSD second-graders receiving special education services in Voyager Passport. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Wahl, M. (2004). Voyager Passport. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Center for Reading Research. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Voyager Passport Reading Journeys™

- Denson, K. (2008). Comparison of the reading achievement of Passport Reading Journeys students with students receiving traditional instruction. Dallas, TX: Voyager Expanded Learning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Denson, K. (2008). Passport Reading Journeys effectiveness with ninth-grade students identified for reading improvement instruction in an urban high school. Dallas, TX: Voyager Expanded Learning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Denson, K. (2008b). *Evaluation of W. T. White* Passport Reading Journeys II *students* 2006–2007. Dallas, TX: Voyager Expanded Learning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Edmondson, C. A. (2004). Effects of instruction in the "Corrective Reading" and "Voyager Reading" programs on the reading skills of students enrolled in a university program.

- (Doctoral dissertation, Utah State University, 2004). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 65(11A), 158–4147. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2007). A summary of the effectiveness of Voyager reading solutions. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

Additional sources:

- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Florida's middle and high school students accelerate their reading skills with Passport Reading Journeys. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). W. T. White High School's (Dallas, TX) reading improvement cohort increases performance on high-stakes assessments with Passport Reading Journeys. Dallas, TX: Author.
- Voyager Expanded Learning, Inc. (2008a). A summary of the effectiveness of Passport Reading Journeys. Dallas, TX:

 Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

Additional source:

Voyager Expanded Learning. (2008). W. T. White High School's (Dallas, TX) reading improvement cohort increases performance on high-stakes assessments with Passport Reading Journeys. Dallas, TX: Author.

Voyager Universal Literacy System®

MAGI Educational Services, Inc. (n.d.). New York State's Reading for Results. White Plains, NY: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

- Roberts, G. (n.d.). Longitudinal study of the effect of Universal Literacy: A hierarchical linear modeling analysis of curriculumbased measurement data. Dallas, TX: Evaluation Research Services. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Sigma Plus Research & Evaluation. (2006). Texas Reading First Grant: Program status at the end of year 3. Lubbock, TX:

 Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Van Sciver, M. (2002). Voyager Universal Literacy System. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Center for Reading Research. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Expect Results in Texas schools: Using Voyager intervention programs that work.

 Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Lowest-performing Lake Weston Elementary (FL) students achieve proficiency on FCAT. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2006). Low-performing Fulton County, GA third-graders in Universal Literacy outperform state on CRCT. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.
- Voyager Expanded Learning. (2007). A summary of the effectiveness of Voyager reading solutions. Dallas, TX: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.