

CLASSWORKS – READING FIRST

Assessment of the Classworks Curriculum Using “A Consumer’s Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis”

(Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement, University of Oregon)

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SECTION 1. – ABSTRACT

The University of Oregon is one of the leading research institutions in the country. University of Oregon's Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement (IDEA) supports research and services that foster scholarship. It produces and disseminates information and provides access to educational research. IDEA's *A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Guide K-3* is a nationally recognized assessment instrument for evaluating reading programs. It assesses phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency with text, vocabulary and comprehension. This assessment draws upon *The Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read, Reports of the Subgroups* under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources for its definition of quality instruction principles. This assessment follows the framework of *A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Guide K-3* in evaluating Classworks as a Core Reading Program. "A new generation of reading programs is currently finding its way into the market place; a generation of programs that holds great promise yet lack evidence of efficacy." (Consumer's Guide) Classworks has been available to schools since 1993. It has over 3,000 hours of computer-aided instruction and is in over 2,000 schools. The curriculum was developed using scientifically based research. It meets the mandates of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). IDEA's *A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Guide K-3* is used to assess a programs efficacy and to determine if it should be implemented as a core reading program.

SECTION 2. – OVERVIEW

An assessment using *A Consumer’s Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Guide K-3* is conducted only when and if a reading program is based on prior scientific studies and has been actively tested in schools and classrooms of various demographics. A thorough assessment determines efficacy only if the program has undergone carefully “designed experimental studies”, reflects “current and confirmed research in reading”, provides “explicit, systematic instruction in the primary grades (K-3)” in “phonemic awareness (grades K-1), phonics/decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension (listening and reading).” (Consumer’s Guide) A core program must also “address all grade-level standards and ensure that high priority standards are taught in sufficient depth, breadth, and quality that all learners will achieve or exceed expected levels of proficiency.” The review process involves a considerable sampling of the courseware and evaluation of its lesson, scope and sequence, and skills trace procedures. In addition, the product was evaluated for simple to complex skills patterns. A determination of skill introduction based upon prior knowledge was made, as well. The evidence for each of the high priority and discretionary elements within *A Consumer’s Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Guide K-3* is documented. The culmination of the study is a summary of the findings based upon criterion scores. An overall analysis of the products design elements and its management/reporting features are also included within this document.

SECTION 3. – STAGE ONE: IS THERE TRUSTWORTHY EVIDENCE OF PROGRAM EFFICACY?

In order to determine program efficacy the following elements were considered: Classworks interactive software, the Classworks manual, state and national editions and alignments, and the Classworks Project Database. The following national standards were taken into consideration during the review process:

- NCTE – National Council of Teachers of English
- IRA – International Reading Association
- NRP – National Reading Panel

In addition, the following state editions were reviewed for comprehensiveness in meeting the core reading requirements:

- Arizona
- California
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Mississippi
- Nevada
- New York
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Virginia

Primary evaluation focused on NCTE standards. Secondary consideration was given to state specific editions in order to ascertain whether Classworks state editions met priority criterion, as well. Each grade level was evaluated based on specific elements provided within *A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Guide K-3*.

SECTION 4. – STAGE TWO: A CONSUMER’S GUIDE TO SELECTING A CORE PROGRAM: A CRITICAL ELEMENTS ANALYSIS

Critical elements analysis considered three types of sampling procedures. Determinations were made based on the lesson, scope and sequence, and skill trace procedures. Lesson procedure **(w)** “involves identifying the first day (lesson) in which a critical skill (e.g. letter sound correspondence, word reading) is introduced and following that skill over a sequence of 2-3 days.” (Consumer’s Guide) This process took into consideration initial lessons within the Classworks software itself. The skill was then followed throughout the series to determine its scope and sequence. The Scope and Sequence **(ss)** procedure “involves using the scope and sequence to identify the initial instruction on a skill and analyze how instruction progresses over time.” (Consumer’s Guide) In addition to the software, Classworks documentation and ancillary materials were reviewed to determine depth of the learning process. Individual or isolated skills were analyzed using the Skills Trace **(st)** procedure.

- **(w)** – Lesson procedure
- **(ss)** – Scope and Sequence procedure
- **(st)** – Skills Trace procedure

Classworks software, manuals, and ancillary materials were reviewed for each critical element referenced in *A Consumer’s Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Guide K-3*. Each process was administered by grade level and then reevaluated for overall program efficacy.

SECTION 5. – CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The critical elements considered in this evaluation were:

- phonemic awareness (grades K-1)
- phonics/decoding
- vocabulary
- comprehension (listening and reading)

Each stage considered grade level specific elements. Evidence for each element includes a review of Classworks software and ancillary materials in determining whether Classworks does or does not meet the objective.

Kindergarten

The high priority and discretionary critical elements evaluated for Kindergarten are:

High Priority Critical Elements –

Phonemic Awareness

- Progresses from the easier phonemic awareness activities to the more difficult (e.g., isolation, blending, segmentation, and manipulation). **(ss)**
- Teaches skills explicitly and systematically. **(w)**
- Models phonemic awareness tasks and responses orally and follows with students' production of the task. **(w)**
- Integrates letter-sound correspondence instruction to phonological awareness. **(w)**
- Focuses on segmentation or the combination of blending and segmenting for greatest transfer. **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 2-41]

Letter-Sound Association Instruction

- Introduces high-utility letter sound instruction early in the sequence (e.g., /m/, /s/, /a/, /r/, /t/) instead of low-utility letter sounds (e.g., /x/, /y/, /z/). **(ss)**
- Explicitly models the letter sound prior to student practice and assessment. **(w)**
- Incorporates frequent and cumulative review of taught letter sounds to automacity.

Decoding Instruction

- Provides explicit strategy for blending words. **(w)** [NRP, pg. 2-96]
- Provides multiple opportunities within lessons for students to blend and read words. **(w)**
- Provides sufficient guided practice in decodable word lists and short, controlled connected text. **(w)** and **(ss)**
- Introduces regular word types (CV or CVC) first in the sequence. **(ss)**
- Introduces regular word types for which students know all the letter sounds. **(ss)**

Decoding Instruction

- Provides explicit strategy for blending words. **(w)** [NRP, pg. 2-96]
- Provides multiple opportunities within lessons for students to blend and read words. **(w)**
- Provides sufficient guided practice in decodable word lists and short, controlled connected text. **(w)** and **(ss)**
- Introduces regular word types (CV or CVC) first in the sequence. **(ss)**
- Introduces regular word types for which students know all the letter sounds. **(ss)**

Irregular Words Instruction

- Introduces words of high utility (e.g., I, have, etc.) with ample practice for automacity. **(w)** and **(st)**

Vocabulary Instruction

- Provides direct instruction of specific concepts and vocabulary. **(w)**
- Provides repeated and multiple exposures to critical vocabulary. **(w)** and **(st)**
- Integrates words into sentences and asks students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence and to use it in a variety of contexts. **(w)**

Listening Instruction

- Models and systematically reviews critical comprehension strategies. **(st)**
[NRP, pg. 4-126; pp 4-100]
 - o Literal comprehension
 - o Retelling
- Models and guides the students through story structure (e.g. setting), verbally identifying the elements. **(w)** [NRP, pg 4-100]
- Strategically selects and reinforces critical vocabulary during story reading (connects with background knowledge and examples). **(w)** and **(ss)**
- Provides plentiful opportunities to listen to and explore narrative and expository text forms and to engage in interactive discussion of the messages and meanings of the text. **(ss)**
[NRP, pp 4-109]

Discretionary Critical Elements –

Phonemic Awareness

- Focuses beginning instruction on the phonemic level of phonological units with short words (two to three phonemes; e.g., at, mud, run).
- Makes students' cognitive manipulations of sounds overt by using auditory cues or manipulatives that signal the movement of one sound to the next.
- Focuses first on the initial sound (sat), then on the final sound (sat), and lastly on the medial sound (sat) in words.
- Provides brief instructional sessions. (Significant gains in phonemic awareness are often made in 15 to 20 minutes of daily instruction and practice over a period of 9 to 12 weeks.)
[NRP 5-15 hrs total, pg. 2-41]

Letter-Sound Association Instruction

- Sequences the introduction of letter sounds in ways that minimize confusion (e.g., sequence /p/, /b/, /v/, /e/, /i/).
- Includes a few short vowels early in the sequence so that students can use letter-sound knowledge to segment and blend words.

Irregular Words Instruction

- Limits # of words introduced within a lesson.
- Separates highly similar words (e.g., was/saw).

Vocabulary Instruction

- Reviews previously introduced words cumulatively.
- Provides opportunity for daily listening, speaking, and language experience.
- Incorporates exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to a wide range of stories and informational texts.

Listening Instruction

- Focuses on only a few important elements and introduces additional elements when the students can reliably identify those previously taught. [NRP, pg. 4-100]
- Models multiple examples and provides extensive guided practice in listening-comprehension strategies. [NRP, pg. 4-107]
- Inserts questions at strategic intervals to reduce the memory load for learners when introducing strategies in stories. (For example, have students retell the important events after each page rather than wait for the end of the story.) [NRP, pg. 4-110; pg. 4-111]

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality

Classworks is a self-directed computer-aided self-paced instruction program that provides established instructional activities that are branched based on student mastery. Classworks Kindergarten provides activities from the following publishers:

- Fairy Tale Classics by Educational Publishing Concepts
- The First “R” Kindergarten by Milliken Publishing
- JumpStart Phonics by Knowledge Adventures
- JumpStart Kindergarten by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart Kindergarten Reading by Knowledge Adventure
- Kid Phonics I by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Blaster 4-6 by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Blaster 6-9 by Davidson & Associates
- Story Club by Davidson & Associates

The activities are merged into one cohesive program allowing teachers to monitor and report progress, assign remediation activities, and provide intervention strategies.

Classworks provides ample systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and word builder activities at the kindergarten level. Phonemic awareness activities include:

- Learning the ABCs
- Rhyming words exercises
- Letter recognition
- Letters in ABC order
- Letter matching
- Initial consonants
- Uppercase letters
- Lowercase letters
- Syllables in spoken words
- Beginning sounds
- Final consonants
- Short vowels
- Blending onset and rime
- Blending CVC and CVCC words in word families

Phonemes are presented initially in isolation and then gradually blended as students attain mastery of each concept. Finally, phoneme substitution is introduced and students are provided with word family recognition and manipulation activities.

Classworks when presented in tandem with a basal reader series provides a comprehensive core reading program. The Classworks Kindergarten curriculum compliments essential concepts and skills provided in a comprehensive Kindergarten reading program.

Classworks provides live voice instruction using intelligible speech in interactive exercises that engage the individual learner in focused activities. Classworks software and ancillary materials provide teachers opportunities to isolate individual skills, stories and concepts in individualized instruction, peer tutoring, or whole class instruction. Stories from upper grade alignments can be used at the teacher's discretion to meet individual objectives. Reading Blaster activities are appropriate for ages 4-9. However, some concepts may require teacher or peer support. It is recommended that the use of off-line or follow-up classroom activities are implemented to support the concepts presented in the computer aided instruction. Blended e-Learning strategies are recommended that incorporate best teaching practices and a variety of educational tools.

Evidence of Insufficient Instructional Quality

Classworks supplements a basal reader series. However, it is insufficient in higher order thinking skills and standardized vocabulary development. The Kindergarten component does not incorporate text elements. However, teachers can pull activities to meet requirements from any level for tutorial, teacher-directed, whole class, or small group instruction. It is recommended that off-line or follow-up classroom activities are implemented to support concepts presented in the computer-aided instruction. Blended eLearning strategies are recommended that incorporate best teaching practices and a variety of educational tools.

Additional Comments

Classworks provides ample opportunity to obtain fluency in the following skills at the Kindergarten level in phonemic awareness. The Kindergarten Language Arts component provides exemplary instruction. Classworks is unique in that it is an amalgam of software packages from a variety of vendors into one management tool. Teachers and administrators can monitor progress, assign remedial instruction, reassign tests, integrate intervention strategies, and print progress reports. Classworks also allows teachers to assign an individualized education plan that assesses mastery and monitors progress in branching activities. Teachers can also select individual objectives in isolated instruction or group items for self-paced, tutorial, teacher-directed, whole class, or small group instruction.

First Grade

The high priority and discretionary critical elements evaluated for First Grade are:

High Priority Critical Elements –

Phonemic Awareness

- Allocates appropriate amount of daily time to blending, segmenting, and manipulating tasks until proficient. **(w)** [NRP, pg. 2-41]
- Incorporates letter into phonemic awareness activities. **(w)** [NRP, pg. 2-41]

Phonics Instruction

- Progresses systematically from simple word types (e.g., consonant-vowel-consonant) and word lengths (e.g., number of phonemes) and word complexity (e.g., phonemes in the word, position of blends, stop sounds) to more complex words. **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 2-132]
- Models instruction at each of the fundamental stages (e.g., letter-sound correspondences, blending, reading whole words). **(w)** and **(ss)**
- Provides teacher-guided practice in controlled word lists and connected text in which students can apply their newly learned skills successfully. **(w)**
- Includes repeated opportunities to read words in contexts in which students can apply their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences. **(w)** and **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 3-28]
- Uses decodable text based on specific phonics lessons in the early part of the first grade as an intervening step between explicit skill acquisition and the students' ability to read quality trade books. Decodable texts should contain the phonics elements and sight words that students have been taught. **(w)** and **(ss)**

Irregular Words Instruction

- Introduces words of high utility (e.g., I, have, etc.) with ample practice for automaticity. **(w)** and **(st)**
- Selects words of high utility with ample practice for automaticity. **(st)**
- Controls the number of irregular words introduced at one time. **(w)**

Connected Text and Fluency Instruction

- Introduces passage reading soon after students can read a sufficient number of words accurately. **(w)**
- Contains regular words comprised of letter-sounds and word types that have been taught. **(w)** and **(ss)**
- Contains only high-frequency irregular words that have been previously taught. **(ss)**
- Uses initial stories/passages composed of a high percentage of regular words (minimum of 75-80% decodable words). **(w)**
- Builds toward a 60 word per minute fluency goal by end of grade. **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 3-4]
- Includes sufficient independent practice materials of appropriate difficulty for students to develop fluency. **(w)** and **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 3-28]

Vocabulary Instruction

- Provides direct instruction of specific concepts and vocabulary. **(w)**
- Provides repeated and multiple exposures to critical vocabulary. **(w)** and **(st)**
- Integrates words into sentences and asks students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence and to use it in a variety of contexts. **(w)**

Reading Comprehension Instruction

- Guides students through sample text in which teachers think out loud as they identify the components of story structure. **(w)** [NRP, pg. 4-122]
- Provides plentiful opportunities to listen to and explore narrative and expository text forms and to engage in interactive discussion of the messages and meanings of the text. **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 4-109]
- Explicitly teaches critical comprehension strategy (e.g., main idea, literal, inferential, retell, prediction). **(w)** and **(ss)**

Discretionary Critical Elements –

Phonemic Awareness

- Analyzes words at the phoneme level (i.e. working with individual sounds within words).
- Works with phonemes in all positions in words (initial, final, medial).
- Progresses from identifying or distinguishing the positions of sounds in words to producing the sound and adding, deleting, and changing selected sounds.
- Works with increasingly longer words (three to four phonemes).
- Expands beyond the consonant-vowel-consonant words (e.g., sun) to more complex phonemic structures (consonant blends).

Phonics Instruction

- Provides integrated proactive instruction and practice in words that students first read, spell, and write.
- Sequences words strategically to incorporate known letters or letter-sound combinations. [NRP, pg. 2-132]

- Begins instruction in word families and word patterns (i.e., reading orthographic units of text, such as at, sat, fat, rat) after students have learned the letter-sound correspondences in the unit. [NRP, pg. 2-132]
- Teaches students to process larger, highly represented patterns to increase fluency in word recognition.

Irregular Words Instruction

- Strategically separates high-frequency words (e.g., was, saw; them, they, there), that are often confused by students.
- Points out irregularities while focusing student attention on all letters in the word.

Connected Text and Fluency Instruction

- Teaches explicit strategy to move from reading words in lists to reading words in sentences and passages.
- Introduces fluency practice (e.g., repeated reading) after students read words in passages accurately. [NRP, pg. 3-28; pg. 3-15]

Vocabulary Instruction

- Reviews previously introduced words cumulatively.
- Provides opportunity for daily listening, speaking, and language experience.
- Incorporates exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to a wide range of stories and informational texts.

Reading Comprehension Instruction

- The text for initial instruction in comprehension:
 - begins with text units appropriate for the learner
 - uses familiar vocabulary
 - activates prior knowledge [NRP, pg. 4-108]
 - uses simple sentences
 - begins with short passages to reduce the memory load for learners
- Introduces text where the structure of text is explicit (beginning, middle, and end being obvious). [NRP, pg. 4-112]
- Has students discuss the story structure orally and make comparisons with other stories. [NRP, pg. 4-100]

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality

Classworks is a self-directed computer-aided self-paced instruction program that provides established instructional activities that are branched based on student mastery. Classworks First Grade provides activities from the following publishers:

- Fairy Tale Classics by Educational Publishing Concepts
- The First “R” Kindergarten by Milliken Publishing
- Introducing Main Idea with Pictures by Educational Publishing Concepts
- JumpStart Phonics by Knowledge Adventure

- JumpStart Kindergarten by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart Kindergarten Reading by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart 1st Grade Edition by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart 6th Grade Edition by Knowledge Adventure
- Kid Phonics I by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Blaster 4-6 by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Blaster 4-6 (RB, Jr.) by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Blaster 6-9 by Davidson & Associates
- Story Club by Davidson & Associates
- Writing Blaster by Davidson & Associates

The activities are merged into one cohesive program allowing teachers to monitor and report progress, assign remediation activities, and provide intervention strategies. In addition, the software allows teachers to isolate activities for individual students/classes, pool like items to meet individual objectives, or follow a pre-designated instructional scope and sequence.

Classworks provides ample systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and word builder activities at the first grade level. Phonemic awareness activities include:

- Rhyming words exercises
- Letter recognition
- Letters in ABC order
- Letter matching
- Initial consonants
- Uppercase Letters
- Lowercase Letters
- Syllables in Spoken Words
- Beginning Sounds
- Final consonants
- Short vowels
- Blending onset and rime
- Blending CVC and CVCC words in word families

Phonemes are presented initially in isolation and then gradually blended as students attain mastery of each concept. Finally, phoneme substitution is introduced and students are provided with word family recognition and manipulation activities.

Classworks when presented in tandem with Classworks projects database and a basal reader series provides a comprehensive core reading program. The Classworks First Grade curriculum compliments essential concepts and skills provided in a comprehensive First Grade reading program.

Classworks provides live voice instruction using intelligible speech in interactive exercises that engage the individual learner in focused activities. Classworks software and ancillary materials provides teachers opportunities to isolate individual skills, stories and concepts in individualized

instruction, peer tutoring, or whole class instruction. Stories from upper grade alignments can be used at the teacher's discretion to meet individual objectives. Reading Blaster activities are appropriate for ages 4-9. However, some concepts may require teacher or peer support. It is recommended that the use of off-line or follow-up classroom activities are implemented to support the concepts presented in the computer-aided instruction. Blended e-Learning strategies are recommended that incorporate best teaching practices and a variety of educational tools.

Activities that incorporate higher order thinking skills for synthesis and application are provided in the Classworks project database. These activities blend learning activities that evolve into culminating projects. The Classworks projects database includes the following:

- An Invitation
- Boxes for Everything
- How Many?
- Patchwork Quilt

Classworks supplements a basal reader series. However, it is insufficient in standardized vocabulary development. The First Grade component incorporates a variety of text elements. In addition, teachers may pull activities to meet requirements from any level for tutorial, teacher-directed, whole class, or small group instruction. It is recommended that off-line or follow-up classroom activities are implemented to support concepts presented in the computer-aided instruction. Blended eLearning strategies are recommended that incorporate best teaching practices and a variety of educational tools.

Additional Comments

Classworks provides ample systematic opportunity to obtain fluency in the following skills at the First Grade level in phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, and reading comprehension. The First Grade Language Arts component provides exemplary instruction. Classworks is unique in that it is an amalgam of software packages from a variety of vendors into one management tool. Teachers and administrators can monitor progress, assign remedial instruction, reassign tests, integrate intervention strategies, and print progress reports. Classworks also allows teachers to assign an individualized education plan that assesses mastery and monitors progress in branching activities. Teachers can also select individual objectives in isolated instruction or group items for self-paced, tutorial, teacher-directed, whole class, or small group instruction. The First Grade Language Arts edition uses connected text items that allow student to attain fluency.

Second Grade

The high priority and discretionary critical elements evaluated for Second Grade are:

High Priority Critical Element –

Phonics Instruction

- Teaches advanced phonic-analysis skills explicitly, first in isolation, then in words and connected text and applies to other program materials (e.g., trade books, anthologies) when students are proficient. **(w)** and **(ss)** [NRP pg. 2-13]
- Provides teacher guided practice in word lists and controlled contexts in which students can apply newly learned skills successfully. **(w)**
- Teaches explicit strategy to read multisyllabic words by using prefixes, suffixes, and known word parts. **(w)**

Irregular Words Instruction

- Selects words that have high utility; that is, words that are used frequently in grade-appropriate literature and informational text. **(ss)**

Vocabulary Instruction

- Provides direct instruction of specific concepts and vocabulary essential to understanding text. **(w)** [NRP, pg. 4-4]
- Provides repeated and multiple exposures to critical vocabulary. **(w)** and **(st)** [NRP, pg. 4-4]

Passage Reading Fluency Instruction

- Contains regular words comprised of phonic elements and word types that have been introduced. **(ss)**
- Selects majority of high frequency irregular words from list of commonly used words in English. **(ss)**
- Builds toward a 90 word-per-minute fluency goal by end of grade 2. Assesses fluency regularly. **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 3-4]

Reading Comprehension Instruction

- Teaches conventions of informational text (e.g., titles, chapter headings) to locate important information. **(w)** and **(ss)**
- Teaches explicit strategy to interpret information from graphs, diagrams, and charts. **(w)** and **(ss)**
- Teaches or activates prior knowledge to increase a student's understanding of what is read. [NRP, pg. 4-108] **(w)**
- Teaches skill or strategy (e.g., comprehension monitoring, summarizing) explicitly with the aid of carefully designed examples and practice. **(w)** and **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 4-108]

- Continues skill or strategy instruction across several instructional sessions to illustrate the applicability and utility of the skill or strategy.
- Uses story grammar structure as a tool for prompting information to compare and contrast, organize information, and group related ideas to maintain a consistent focus. **(w)**
[NRP, pg. 4-112]

Discretionary Items –

Phonics Instruction

- Avoids assuming that learners will automatically transfer skills from one word type to another. When introducing a new letter combination, prefix, or word ending, models each of the fundamental stages of blending the word and then reading the whole word.
- Separates auditorily and visually similar letter combinations in the instructional sequence (e.g., does not introduce both sounds for oo simultaneously; separates ai, au).
- Ensures that students know the sounds of the individual letters prior to introducing larger orthographic units (e.g., ill, ap, ing).
- Offers repeated opportunities for students to read words in contexts where they can apply their advanced phonics skills with a high level of success. [NRP, pg. 3-28; 3-15]
- Incorporates spelling to reinforce word analysis. After students can read words, provides explicit instruction in spelling, showing students how to map the sounds of letters onto print.
- Makes clear the connections between decoding (symbol to sound) and spelling (sound to symbol).

Irregular Words Instruction

- Sequences high-frequency irregular words to avoid potential confusion. For example, high-frequency words that are often confused by students should be strategically separated for initial instruction.
- Limits the number of sight words introduced at one time.
- Preteaches the sight words prior to reading connected text.
- Provides a cumulative review of important high-frequency sight words as part of daily reading instruction.

Vocabulary Instruction

- Variety of methods [NRP, pg. 4-4]
- Incorporates exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to and reading stories and informational texts. [NRP, pg. 4-4]
- Integrates words into sentences and asks students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence and to use it in a variety of contexts. [NRP, pg. 4-4]
- Reviews previously introduced words cumulatively. [NRP, pg. 4-4]
- Teaches strategy for word meanings based on meaning of prefixes and suffixes.
- Introduces the prefix or suffix in isolation, indicating its meaning and then connecting it in words.

- Illustrates the prefix or suffix with multiple examples.
- Restructuring of vocabulary tasks for at-risk, low achieving students.
- Uses examples when the roots are familiar to students (e.g., remake and replay as opposed to record and recode.)
- Separates prefixes that appear similar in initial instructional sequences (e.g., pre, pro).

Passage Reading Fluency Instruction

- Contains only irregular words that have been previously taught.
- Introduces repeated readings after students read words in passages accurately. [NRP, pg. 3-28; 3-15]
- Includes sufficient independent practice materials of appropriate difficulty for students to develop fluency. [NRP, pg. 3-28]

Reading Comprehension Instruction

- Teaches narrative and informational text.
- Organizes instruction in a coherent structure.
- Connects previously taught skills and strategies with new content and text. [NRP, 4-107]
- Cumulatively builds a repertoire of skills and strategies that are introduced, applied, and integrated with appropriate texts and for authentic purposes over the course of the year. [NRP, 4-107]
- Teaches analyzing elements of narrative text and comparing and contrasting elements within and among texts.
- Uses graphic organizers on the content of passages.

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality

Classworks as a self-directed computer aided self-paced instruction program that provides established instructional activities that are branched based on student mastery. Classworks Second Grade provides activities from the following publishers:

- Bar Graphs & Pictographs by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Fairy Tale Classics by Educational Publishing Concepts
- First Steps
- The First “R” Kindergarten by Milliken Publishing
- The First “R”: 2nd Grade by Milliken Publishing
- Graph Club by Tom Snyder Productions
- Introducing Main Idea with Pictures by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Introducing Problem Solving by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Introducing Tally Charts by Educational Publishing Concepts
- JumpStart Phonics by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart Kindergarten by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart Kindergarten Reading by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart 1st Grade Edition by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart 2nd Grade Edition by Knowledge Adventure
- JumpStart 6th Grade Edition by Knowledge Adventure

- Kid Phonics I by Davidson & Associates
- Learning Voyage Grade 3 by Learning Ways
- Primary Basic Reading Skills by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Read and Roll: Summary by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Reading Blaster 4-6 by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Blaster 4-6 (RB, Jr.) by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Blaster 6-9 by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Strategies by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Spell-It Deluxe
- Story Club by Davidson & Associates
- Understanding Graphic Organizers by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Using a Table by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Using Word Webs by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Writing Blaster by Davidson & Associates

The activities are merged into one cohesive program allowing teachers to monitor and report progress, assign remediation activities, and provide intervention strategies. In addition, the software allows teachers to isolate activities for individual students/classes, pool like items to meet individual objectives, or follow a pre-designated instructional scope and sequence.

Classworks provides ample systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and word builder activities at the second grade level. Phonemic awareness activities include:

- Phonemic Awareness and Word Builder Activities
 - o Rhyming Words
 - o Soft & Hard Consonants
 - o Real vs. False Words
 - o Matching Words to Final Sounds
 - o Word Explorer
 - o Missing Letters
 - o Blends
 - o Diagraphs
 - o Silent Letters
 - o Controlled Vowels
- Reading Comprehension Activities
 - o Reading Strategies
 - o Drawing Conclusions
 - o Making Predictions
 - o Cause and Effect
 - o Sequencing
 - o Fact and Opinion
 - o Summarization
 - o Compare and Contrast
 - o Story Maps
 - o Graphic Organizers

- o Charts/Graphs
- o Understanding Punctuation
- o Subject/Verb Agreement
- o Present/Past Tense Verbs
- o Rules of Spelling

Phonemes are presented initially in isolation and then gradually blended as students attain mastery of each concept. Finally, phoneme substitution is introduced and students are provided with word family recognition and manipulation activities.

Classworks when presented in tandem with Classworks projects database and a basal reader series provides a comprehensive core reading program. The Classworks Second Grade curriculum compliments essential concepts and skills provided in a comprehensive Second Grade reading program.

Classworks provides live voice instruction using intelligible speech in interactive exercises that engage the individual learner in focused activities. Classworks software and ancillary materials provides teachers opportunities to isolate individual skills, stories and concepts in individualized instruction, peer tutoring, or whole class instruction. Stories from upper grade alignments can be used at the teacher's discretion to meet individual objectives. Reading Blaster activities are appropriate for ages 4-9. However, some concepts may require teacher or peer support. It is recommended that the use of off-line or follow-up classroom activities are implemented to support the concepts presented in the computer aided instruction. Blended e-Learning strategies are recommended that incorporate best teaching practices and a variety of educational tools.

Higher order thinking skills are presented in a variety of projects that utilize synthesis and application activities. The Classworks projects database includes the following:

- A Letter to a Friend
- An Invitation
- Boxes for Everything
- Class Dictionary
- Homophone Cards
- How Many?
- Long Lost Letter
- My Favorite Movie
- My Favorite Word
- My Friend and I
- My Neighborhood
- My Room List
- My Whale Tale Story
- Patchwork Quilt
- Where Would I Live?

These activities blend learning activities that evolve into culminating projects.

Classworks is a self-directed computer aided self-paced instruction program that provides established instructional activities that are branched based on student mastery results. Classworks provides activities from a variety of publishers into one cohesive management program. The management program allows teachers to monitor students, report progress, assign remediation activities, and provide intervention strategies. The Second Grade component incorporates a variety of text elements. In addition, teachers may pull activities to meet requirements from any level for tutorial, teacher-directed, whole class, or small group instruction. It is recommended that off-line or follow-up classroom activities are implemented to support concepts presented in the computer aided instruction. Blended eLearning strategies are recommended that incorporate best teaching practices and a variety of educational tools.

Additional Comments

Classworks provides ample systematic opportunity to obtain fluency in the following skills at the Second Grade level in phonics instruction, irregular word instruction, skill builder activities and reading comprehension. The Second Grade Language Arts component provides exemplary instruction. Classworks is unique in that it is an amalgam of software packages from a variety of vendors into one management tool. Teachers and administrators can monitor progress, assign remedial instruction, reassign tests, integrate intervention strategies, and print progress reports. Classworks also allows teachers to assign an individualized education plan that assesses mastery and monitors progress in branching activities. Teachers can also select individual objectives in isolated instruction or group items for self-paced, tutorial, teacher-directed, whole class, or small group instruction. The Second Grade Language Arts edition uses connected text items that allow student to attain fluency.

Third Grade

The high priority and discretionary critical elements evaluated for Third Grade are:

High Priority Critical Element –

Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction

- Teaches strategies to decode multisyllabic words using the structural features of such word parts as affixes (e.g., pre-, mis-, -tion) to aid in word recognition. **(w)**
- Emphasizes reading harder and bigger words (i.e., multisyllabic words) and reading all words more fluently. **(ss)**

Vocabulary Instruction

- Teaches strategies to use context to gain the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Context includes the words surrounding the unfamiliar words that provide information to its meaning. **(w)**
- Repeated and multiple exposures to vocabulary. **(st)** [NRP, pg. 4-4]
- Emphasizes direct instruction in specific concepts and vocabulary essential to understanding text. **(w)**
- Provides exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to and reading stories. **(ss)**, [NRP, pg. 4-4]
- Variety of methods, variety of contexts. **(ss)**, [NRP, pg. 4-4]

Passage Reading Fluency Instruction

- Contains only words comprised of phonic elements and word types that have been introduced. **(w)** and **(ss)**
- Builds toward a 120 word-per-minute fluency goal by end of grade 3. Assess fluency regularly. **(ss)**, [NRP, pg. 3-28]
- Includes sufficient independent practice materials of appropriate difficulty for students to develop fluency. **(w)**, [NRP, pg. 3-28]

Reading Comprehension Instruction

- Teaches background information and/or activates prior knowledge. **(w)** [NRP, pg. 4-108]
- Uses text in which the main idea or comprehension unit is explicitly stated, clear, and in which the ideas follow a logical order. **(w)**
- Uses known or taught vocabulary and passages at appropriate readability levels for learners. **(w)**
- Continues skill or strategy instruction across several instructional sessions to illustrate the applicability and utility of the skill or strategy. **(w)** and **(st)**
- Connects previously taught skills and strategies with new content and text. **(w)** and **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 4-107]
- Cumulatively builds a repertoire of multiple strategies that are introduced, applied, and integrated with appropriate texts and for authentic purposes over the course of the year. **(w)** and **(ss)** [NRP, pg. 4-107]

- Explicitly teaches comprehension strategies with the aid of carefully designed examples and practice (e.g., comprehension monitoring, mental imagery, question generation, question answering, story structure, and summarization). **(w)** [NRP, pg. 4-100 to 4-113]

Discretionary Items –

Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction

- Separates word parts that are highly similar (e.g., ight and aight).
- Introduces word parts that occur with high frequency over those that occur in only a few words.
- Teaches the word parts first and then incorporates the words into sentences and connected text.
- Extends instruction to orthographically larger and more complex units (e.g., ight, aught, own).
- Provides explicit explanations, including modeling, "Think-alouds," guided practice, and the gradual transfer of responsibility to students.
- Relies on examples more than abstract rules. (Begin with familiar words. Show "nonexamples." Use word parts rather than have students search for little words within a word. Examples: depart, report.)
- Makes clear the limitations of structural analysis.
- Uses extended text in opportunities for application.

Vocabulary Instruction

- Teaches dictionary usage explicitly with grade-appropriate dictionaries that allow students to access and understand the meaning of an unknown word. Uses words in context and that are encountered frequently.
- Restructuring of vocabulary tasks for at-risk, low achievers.
- Extends the understanding of concepts and vocabulary of the English language through (1) learning and using antonyms and synonyms; (2) using individual words in compound words to predict the meaning; (3) using prefixes and suffixes to assist in word meaning; and (4) learning simple multiple-meaning words.

Passage Reading Fluency Instruction

- Contains only irregular words that have been previously taught.
- Selects majority of high frequency irregular words from list of commonly used words in English.
- Introduces repeated readings after students read words in passages accurately. [NRP, pg. 3-28; 3-15]

Reading Comprehension Instruction

- Provides cooperative learning activities that parallel requirements of instruction.
- Begins with linguistic units appropriate to the learner; for example, uses pictures and a set of individual sentences before presenting paragraph or passage-level text to help students learn the concept of main idea.

- Uses familiar, simple syntactical structures and sentence types.
- Progresses to more complex structures in which main ideas are not explicit and passages are longer.

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality

Classworks as a self-directed computer aided self-paced instruction program that provides established instructional activities that are branched based on student mastery. Classworks Third Grade provides activities from the following publishers:

- Ace Detective by Mindplay
- Ace Explorer by Mindplay
- Ace Inquirer by Mindplay
- Ace Reporter by Mindplay
- Fairy Tale Classics by Educational Publishing Concepts
- The First “R”: 3rd Grade by Milliken Publishing
- Inference by Educational Publishing Concepts
- JumpStart 3rd Grade Edition by Knowledge Adventure
- Kid Phonics I by Davidson & Associates
- Learning Voyage Grade 3 by Learning Ways
- Learning Voyage Grade 4 by Learning Ways
- Primary Basic Reading Skills by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Read and Roll: Summary by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Reading Blaster 6-9 by Davidson & Associates
- Reading Strategies by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Spelling Blaster 6-9 by Davidson and Associates
- Spell-It Deluxe
- Understanding Graphic Organizers by Educational Publishing Concepts
- Using Word Webs by Educational Publishing Concepts

The activities are merged into one cohesive program allowing teachers to monitor and report progress, assign remediation activities, and provide intervention strategies. In addition, the software allows teachers to isolate activities for individual students/classes, pool like items to meet individual objectives, or follow a pre-designated instructional scope and sequence.

Classworks provides ample systematic instruction in decoding and vocabulary activities, and passage reading/fluency instruction at the third grade level. Activities include:

- Decoding and Word Recognition Instruction
 - o Categorizing words
 - o Compound words
 - o Recognizing relationships
 - o Understanding affixes
- Vocabulary Instruction
 - o Compare and contrast

- o Decoding unfamiliar words
- o Fact vs. non-fact
- o Graphic organizers
- o Predicting outcomes
- o Rhyming words
- o Sequencing
- o Summarization
- o Understanding affixes
- o Understanding compound words
- o Understanding confusing words
- o Understanding homophones
- o Understanding inferences
- o Understanding main idea
- o Understanding plot
- o Understanding supporting details
- o Using charts and graphs
- o Using context clues
- o Using story clues
- o Using words webs
- Passage Reading - Fluency Instruction
 - o Charts and graphs
 - o Fact vs. non-fact
 - o Graphic organizer
 - o Predicting outcomes
 - o Summarization
 - o Understanding inferences
 - o Understanding main idea
 - o Understanding story clues
 - o Understanding supporting details
 - o Using word webs
 - o Writing concepts

Classworks when presented in tandem with Classworks projects database and a basal reader series provides a comprehensive core reading program. The Classworks Third Grade curriculum compliments essential concepts and skills provided in a comprehensive Third Grade reading program.

Classworks provides live voice instruction using intelligible speech in interactive exercises that engage the individual learner in focused activities. Classworks software and ancillary materials provides teachers opportunities to isolate individual skills, stories and concepts in individualized instruction, peer tutoring, or whole class instruction. Stories from upper grade alignments can be used at the teacher's discretion to meet individual objectives. However, some concepts may require teacher or peer support. It is recommended that the use of off-line or follow-up classroom activities are implemented to support the concepts presented in the computer aided instruction. Blended e-Learning strategies are recommended that incorporate best teaching practices and a variety of educational tools.

Higher order thinking skills are presented in a variety of projects that utilize synthesis and application activities. The Classworks projects database includes the following:

Parts of speech

- A Most Wonderful Birthday
- Ad Mix
- Amazing Animals
- Around the World
- Autobiography
- Barnacles
- Before School
- Boxes for Everything
- Cartoon Strip
- Chef for a Day
- Confusing Dialogue
- Creating an Adverb Phrase
- Email Review
- Everyone Was There
- Gerund Samples
- Get it Straight!
- Grocery List
- How Many?
- Infinitive Uses
- Insert the Adjective
- Just Do It at the Olympics!
- Large and Small
- Look Closely
- Lunch Review
- Make a Sandwich
- Mine All Mine
- My Perfect Mentor
- No Way
- Now and Then
- Object Switch
- Painfully Shy
- Playground Scenes
- Pronoun Ties
- Seasonal Highlights
- Sentence Diagrams
- Sports Writer
- Tense Action

- Testing 1·2·3
- The Chickens' Feathers
- The Cookie Thief
- Using Prepositions
- What? Whom? Whose Is It?

Dictionary and Research Skills

- Class Dictionary
- Dictionary Demonstration
- Export Your Report
- Find the Party
- Long Lost Letter
- My Favorite Substitute
- Research and Report
- Rewrite History
- Scavenger Hunt for Information
- Scramble Winner's Dictionary
- Something I've Always Wanted to Know
- The Extraordinary Dictionary
- The Outline Lifeline
- Where Would I Live?

Literature

- A Scary Place
- Celebrity
- Come to Life
- Comparing Characters
- Comparing Plots
- Critic's Corner
- Flashback
- Harriet Tubman
- House Sale
- Magazine Editor
- Making a Difference
- Memories of a Day
- Pick Your Friends
- Scary Stories
- Tall Tales
- The Art of Poetry
- The Concert
- The Encounter
- The House
- The Mystery
- The Stamp
- Twenty Questions
- Welcome to My Planet
- You Don't Say

Reading Comprehension

- After It's gone
- Animal Rights
- Collage
- Endangered Species
- Event Calendar
- Future Careers
- Halfway Predictions
- How Did That Get There?
- Live on the Internet
- Making News
- My Favorite Author
- My Friend and I
- My Whale Tale Story
- One Thing Leads to Another
- Pet Store Dilemma
- See How They Grow
- Storyboards
- The Backpack
- The Black Cat
- The Driver
- The Effects of Change
- The Great Debate
- The Interview
- The Napkin
- The Stamp
- Why Do We Do That?

Vocabulary

- A Pair of Pears to Pare
- A Word to the Wise
- Bumper Stickers
- Chock-Full of Multiples
- Fishing for Homophones
- Hidden Pairs and Opposites
- Homophone Cards
- If It's All the Same
- Keep Your Eye on the Ball
- Music Review
- New Hobbies
- Professor Misunderstanding
- Reading Between the Lines
- Reminders
- The Suffix Virus

These activities blend learning activities that evolve into culminating projects.

Classworks is a self-directed computer aided self-paced instruction program that provides established instructional activities that are branched based on student mastery results. Classworks provides activities from a variety of publishers into one cohesive management program. The management program allows teachers to monitor students, report progress, assign remediation activities, and provide intervention strategies. The Third Grade component incorporates a variety of text elements. In addition, teachers may pull activities to meet requirements from any level for tutorial, teacher-directed, whole class, or small group instruction. It is recommended that off-line or follow-up classroom activities are implemented to support concepts presented in the computer aided instruction. Blended e-Learning strategies are recommended that incorporate best teaching practices and a variety of educational tools.

Additional Comments

Classworks provides ample systematic opportunity to obtain fluency in the following skills at the Third Grade level in phonics instruction, irregular word instruction, skill builder activities and reading comprehension. The Third Grade Language Arts component provides exemplary instruction. Classworks is unique in that it is an amalgam of software packages from a variety of vendors into one management tool. Teachers and administrators can monitor progress, assign remedial instruction, reassign tests, integrate intervention strategies, and print progress reports. Classworks also allows teachers to assign an individualized education plan that assesses mastery and monitors progress in branching activities. Teachers can also select individual objectives in isolated instruction or group items for self-paced, tutorial, teacher-directed, whole class, or small group instruction. The Third Grade Language Arts edition uses connected text items that allow student to attain fluency.

SECTION 6. – UNDERSTANDING CLASSWORKS DESIGN

Classworks is an interactive software program for K-12 students comprised of 180 different products. The curriculum is compiled into one management system that houses over 9,000 research-based activities or over 3,000 hours of instruction. The Classworks management system allows for pre-designated learning paths based on benchmark mastery. Teachers can also isolate or customized instructional pathways. The software includes branching activities that are designed to foster mastery of individual objectives. In addition, teachers may monitor and report progress throughout the process. Instruction is computer aided design that is self-paced and assesses individual student strengths and weaknesses.

Classworks instruction is by grade level and topic and includes over 1,600 skills and concepts. Classworks language arts standards on based on NCTE and IRA standards and are aligned to widely adopted textbooks, as well.

One of the strengths of the Classworks program is that it provides full individual state editions of its courseware in addition to state alignments. The language arts courseware is assigned by state and by state specific instructional objectives. Classworks is aligned to the following state standards:

- Arizona
- California
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Mississippi
- Nevada
- New York
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Virginia

The instructional process is streamlined and allows teachers to incorporate a wide variety of software from 180 publishers into one management system.

SECTION 7. – CONCLUSION

After careful review and consideration of Classworks software, Classworks support and ancillary materials, and Classworks projects database it has been concluded that Classworks meets and exceeds the standards as a core reading program in phonemic awareness, phonics/decoding, and comprehension (listening and speaking). Classworks meets the standards as a supplemental reading program in vocabulary. Classworks is an amalgam of large number of quality computer aided programs from a variety of vendors. The objectives presented from each vendor are consistent. However, the selected vendors may or may not include a standardized vocabulary list. Therefore, vocabulary development may or may not be cumulative. In most cases, however, a single vendor is used throughout the language arts series to meet specific objectives. Students are exposed to a wide range of grade level specific vocabulary items and vocabulary skill builder activities. The result of this is a vocabulary rich product that utilizes a variety of methods to consistently meet reading objectives.

Classworks incorporates phonemic awareness activities, fluency instruction, vocabulary instruction, and reading comprehension instruction. Phonemes as the smallest component of the reading process are introduced initially in isolation. Initially the student is exposed to phonemes and graphemes in isolation. Activities include phoneme isolation, identity, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, and substitution. Onset and rime activities are typically presented at the beginning of a session. Phonemic awareness activities are presented in kindergarten and first grade. Phonemic awareness activities include:

- Blending phonemes
- Combining sounds to make words
- Double vowels
- Final consonants
- Final consonant matching
- Final letter sounds
- Initial consonants
- Initial consonant blends
- Initial letter sounds
- Letter recognition
- Letter sounds
- Lowercase letters
- Rhyming words
- Segmenting phonemes
- Short medial vowels
- Substituting phonemes
- Uppercase letters
- Using y as a vowel
- Word recognition

Phonics and decoding instruction proceeds throughout the entire Classworks language arts program. Activities include:

- Graphophonemic relationships
- Letter-sound associations
- Letter-sound correspondences
- Sound-symbol correspondences
- Sound-spellings

Phonics instruction methods include synthetic phonics (blending sounds to produce words), analytic phonics (letter-sound relationships), analogy-based phonics (word families), and onset and rime phonics.

Fluency instruction in the Classworks program incorporates a variety of methods. Initial instruction includes modeling activities with live voice, intelligible speech. A variety of texts are utilized to build fluency and students are exposed to:

- Word builder
- Sentence builder
- Reading passages
- Writing activities

Vocabulary development included in Classworks includes listening, reading, and writing activities and projects. Daily oral language activities are typically included at the beginning of a session. The activities incorporate direct and indirect strategies. Vocabulary strategies include learning word parts, dictionary and research activities, and using context clues. Students learn affixes, base words, and root words in a variety of skill builder activities. Initially CVC words with short vowels are introduced. Students are then exposed to blended sound and letter combinations. By third grade students are decoding multisyllabic words and using the following concepts in guided practice activities:

- Recognizing relationships
- Categorizing words
- Understanding compound words
- Understanding affixes

Students are reading independently as the program monitors and assesses mastery of individual objectives.

Reading comprehension strategies in Classworks include:

- Author's purpose
- Categorization
- Cause and effect
- Compare and contrast
- Fact vs. non-fact
- Generating questions
- Making inferences

- Predicting outcomes
- Sequencing
- Summarization
- Understanding main idea
- Understanding supporting details
- Using graphic organizers
- Using story clues

Activities incorporate direct and indirect instruction. Strategies include modeling, guided practice, synthesis, and application activities. Instruction draws upon prior knowledge and activities build upon mastery of prerequisite objectives. Classworks draws from a wide variety of texts and utilizes cross-curricular instruction.

The Classworks language arts program can be implemented, with confidence, for K-3 language arts instruction.

SECTION 8. – BIBLIOGRAPHY

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