



Can Curriculum Advantage’s Classworks and Voyager Learning’s Passport Series be used simultaneously?

Literacy is one of the most pressing topics in education and every school is feeling the pressure; the question is *what can be done to improve the reading skills of all students?* Two programs on the market right now are answering this very question. Both Curriculum Advantage’s Classworks and Voyager Learning’s Passport Series have been evaluated and found to meet Reading First criteria as outlined by NCLB. While both aim at improving students’ literacy skills, they do it in very distinct ways. The two programs are aligned in both desired outcomes and in specific learning objectives, but the manner in which they execute and produce success for students is quite different. The fundamental differences between these two programs and the reasons that they are in fact compatible lie in the instructional methodology used and the scope of learning activities.

Passport uses direct, teacher-led instruction in one-on-one or small group settings, while Classworks utilizes technology to allow students to work independently through various units and activities that have been tailored to meet individual needs. Both methods are desired and necessary for student success, which is why using the two programs in tandem is a coherent approach to closing the gaps that students experience in reading. With respect to scope, Passport aims at specifically working with struggling readers that are below grade-level. The program provides experiences in the five areas outlined in Reading First– phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension and does so in very explicitly constructed ways. Classworks on the other hand not only provides work in these five areas, but also provides extension and enrichment experiences for all children as well as practice with writing, dictionary and research skills, and work with graphical representations. Classworks is designed to be utilized as a school-wide approach to improving reading skills for all students; its scope expansive.

How can Classworks and Passport be used together in the same classroom?

While a teacher is using Passport’s one-on-one or small group direct instruction with some of the class’ struggling readers, there will inevitably be students that need to be involved in other learning activities. This is a perfect time for all learners to be engaged in improving their own reading skills. This is where Classworks can best be utilized. These other students, struggling with reading or not, can “work their own plan” using Classworks.

Consider an elementary teacher that has around 20 – 25 students. At the beginning of the year, she receives each child’s state test scores or other assessments that will shed light on each



student's current level of reading. She will also most likely do her own assessments, including the initial Passport diagnostic tool. Once a child's reading proficiency has been determined, the teacher has two complementary methods for attack – Classworks and Passport.

The first part of the attack will aim at improving the reading skills of all learners. Using Classworks she will, with the program's help, assign all students appropriate units according to their individual needs. Students will work through these units independently, progressing from one activity to the next in a sequential manner. Classworks units not only provide practice in the five essential areas – phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension, but also threaded throughout the activities is practice with higher-order thinking and practice related specifically to state curriculums (in state editions). The multitude of activities under each unit assures that students are receiving varied instruction through text, voice, and visual representation. The program tracks progress and gathers data about time on task, proficiency with tasks, and what tasks have yet to be completed for each student as well as the entire class.

In the second part of the attack, the teacher herself will address the needs of those readers that are below grade level. Using Passport the teacher will take the diagnostic information compiled at the beginning of the year and work through a series of explicit activities. These activities include work in the five essential areas of reading in 40-45 minute daily, sequential, teacher-led lessons. Progress is measured by the teacher using one-minute oral fluency assessments that can then be entered into a web-based system that helps the teacher analyze student progress. This process continues until the student is found to be reading on grade level.

The combined approach actually provides a more coherent plan that attacks students' reading gaps in very distinct, but complementary ways. Together, the programs provide the support necessary for a teacher to reach every child, not just struggling ones. To challenge every child to improve their reading skills is what teachers should be aiming to achieve, but with class size, such varied levels of students who all learn so differently, and other unavoidable demands on teachers, this has been a constant, frustrating struggle – one where some kids have inevitably been left behind. With Classworks and Passport, teachers are able to meet the individual needs of each and every student using two successful, proven programs – making “no child left behind” a reality.

FAQ

Aren't Passport and Classworks both considered comprehensive, stand-alone products?

Yes, both products are considered comprehensive approaches to reading remediation, but we know from research that no one instructional method works in isolation. For example, direct instruction all day, every day will not help all children or even a single child learn everything necessary – just as completely autonomous instructional technology programs used in isolation without teacher instruction do not provide all the necessary learning experiences. There must be



a combination of several effective learning environments so that teachers are equipped to meet the needs of all students. Both companies have documented studies showing improved reading skills after implementation of their respective products. So, using either program will lead to improvement, but using them together will provide a teacher with the tools necessary to reach every child effectively and efficiently.

If we adopt Classworks on top of Passport, won't it just be more for me to manage – meaning more of my time?

No, actually implementing Classworks along with Passport will save you time. If you are currently managing the Passport system, you are probably spending a significant amount of time planning for the kids that you are not working with directly. This time spent planning can be eased when students are allowed to “work their own plan” with Classworks. In addition to this saved time, you will also find that tracking and assessing *all* students within Classworks is more efficient than other conventional methods. Adding Classworks to your classroom will save you time and you will actually have a better understanding of where *all* of your students are in terms of their reading skills.

If they are both Reading First approved, don't they really do the same thing?

Yes, but Classworks does much more. Passport aims at reaching the struggling readers to get them to read on grade level, while Classworks provides long-term solutions for all levels of readers throughout each grade level on your campus. Within the hundreds of activities, Classworks provides extension for more proficient readers, includes higher-order thinking development for all students, and provides work in areas outside the scope of the Reading First areas, i.e. writing and research skills. Also, Classworks' state editions provide alignment with state curriculums for success on state assessments.

Why would I spend that much more money when I already have Passport?

Classworks is a comprehensive approach to improving reading on your entire campus – from very low readers to very successful readers. Classworks does not just close the reading gap, it continues to support and build necessary skills at all grade levels on your campus. Passport uses direct instruction for the lowest readers and while this approach is desired, a teacher can only work with so many students at one time. Using Classworks alongside Passport, allows a teacher to work with all students, effectively individualizing instruction. When you purchase Classworks you get a site license, so any student at any level can work on honing their skills – year after year – building skills as they move through the grades at your school. Classworks is an on-going program; you receive updates regularly that provide the most relevant activities for students. Classworks is a long-term solution, so you are investing in hundreds of students each and every year, making the rewards tangible and long-lasting.



A side-by-side comparison

Classworks	Passport
Targets the 5 Essential Components of Reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension	Targets the 5 Essential Components of Reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension
Meets Reading First criteria	Meets Reading First criteria
Student works independently	Teacher-led instruction
Varied instructional methods	Direct instruction for all activities
Systematic approach	Systematic approach
Program assesses current level and designs appropriate, individual plan	Teacher assesses current level and uses targeted instruction
Program manages and records individual and class progress data	Teacher manages and records individual data
Age and developmentally appropriate activities	Age and developmentally appropriate materials
Use of other subjects in reading passages	Use of other subjects in reading passages
Ability to assign units that focus on extending skills and higher-order thinking for all levels of readers (expansive scope)	Specifically designed for the struggling reader only (narrow scope)
Students can work at their own pace and time can be adjusted to fit in with any type of instructional models	Requires 40-45 minutes of sequenced, daily, teacher-led instruction
Includes editions that align with specific state curriculums so that students build skills for which they are held accountable on state tests	One program for all

www.voyagerlearning.com

www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first/text.html