



# INTERVENTION REPORT

Topic Area: Adolescent Literacy



## Passport Reading Journeys™

Literacy skills are critical to students' academic achievement and setting them on a path to successful high school graduation and readiness for college and careers. *Passport Reading Journeys™* is a supplemental literacy curriculum designed to help improve reading comprehension, vocabulary, word study, and writing skills of struggling readers in grades 6–12. Lessons incorporate both teacher-led instruction and technology, including whole-class and small-group instruction, independent reading, video segments, and independent computer-based practice. The curriculum includes a series of two-week, ten-lesson instructional sequences on topics in science, math, fine art, literature, and social studies. Each sequence is themed as an expedition or journey for students.<sup>1</sup>

This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC's Adolescent Literacy topic area, explores the effects of *Passport Reading Journeys™* on student literacy. The WWC identified six studies of *Passport Reading Journeys™*. Three of these studies meet WWC standards. The evidence presented in this report is from studies of the impacts of *Passport Reading Journeys™* on students—including white, black, and Hispanic students—in a range of grades—Grade 6 through 9—and a variety of school settings, including urban, suburban, and rural districts.

## What Happens When Students Participate in *Passport Reading Journeys™*?<sup>2</sup>

The evidence indicates that implementing *Passport Reading Journeys™*:

- has inconsistent effects on comprehension<sup>3</sup>
- may result in little or no change in general literacy achievement

Findings on *Passport Reading Journeys™* from three studies that meet WWC standards are shown in Table 1. For each outcome reviewed by the WWC, an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings are presented. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention's effect on an outcome. It can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. The finding on comprehension is based on analyses that include 2,001 students. The findings on general literacy achievement is based on analyses including 2,316 students. See Box 1 for a description of WWC effectiveness ratings.

**Table 1. Summary of findings on *Passport Reading Journeys™* from studies that meet WWC Standards**

Outcome domain	Effectiveness rating	Study findings	Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 4.0)	
		Improvement index (percentile points)	Number of studies	Number of students
Comprehension	Mixed effects	+4	3	2,001
General literacy achievement	No discernible effects	0	3	2,316

Note: The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +4 means that the expected percentile rank of the average comparison group student would increase by 4 points if the student received *Passport Reading Journeys™*. The improvement index values are generated by averaging findings from the outcome analyses that meet WWC standards, as reported by Dimitrov et al. (2012), Schenck et al. (2012), and Vaden-Kiernan et al. (2012). Comprehension outcomes reported in these studies include the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests. General literacy achievement outcomes reported include the EXPLORE test, the Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program, and the Virginia Standards of Learning assessment. The effects of *Passport Reading Journeys™* are not known for other outcomes within the Adolescent Literacy topic area, including alphabetics, reading fluency, writing conventions, writing productivity, and writing quality.

## BOX 1. HOW THE WWC REVIEWS AND DESCRIBES EVIDENCE

The WWC evaluates evidence based on the quality and results of reviewed studies. The criteria the WWC uses for evaluating evidence are defined in the [Procedures and Standards Handbooks](#) and the [Review Protocols](#). The studies summarized in this report were reviewed under WWC Standards (version 4.0) and the Adolescent Literacy topic area protocol (version 4.0).

To determine the effectiveness rating, the WWC considers what methods each study used, the direction of the effects, and the number of studies that tested the intervention. The higher the effectiveness rating, the more certain the WWC is about the reported results and about what will happen if the same intervention is implemented again. The following key explains the relationship between effectiveness ratings and the statements used in this report:

Effectiveness rating	Rating interpretation	Description of the evidence
Positive (or negative) effects	The intervention is <i>likely</i> to change an outcome	Strong evidence of a positive effect, with no overriding contrary evidence
Potentially positive (or negative) effects	The intervention <i>may</i> change an outcome	Evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence
No discernible effects	The intervention <i>may result in little to no change</i> in an outcome	No affirmative evidence of effects
Mixed effects	The intervention <i>has inconsistent effects</i> on an outcome	Evidence includes studies in at least two of these categories: studies with positive effects, studies with negative effects, or more studies with indeterminate effects than with positive or negative effects

## How is *Passport Reading Journeys*™ Implemented?

The following section provides details of how *Passport Reading Journeys*™ was implemented. This information can help educators identify the requirements for implementing *Passport Reading Journeys*™ and determine whether implementing this curriculum would be feasible in their districts or schools. Information on *Passport Reading Journeys*™ presented in this section comes from the three studies that meet WWC standards (Dimitrov et al., 2012; Schenck et al., 2012; Vaden-Kiernan et al., 2012) and from correspondence with the developer, Cambium Learning Group. Voyager Sopris Learning® is the distributor.

- **Goal:** *Passport Reading Journeys*™ aims to improve literacy skills of struggling students, including reading comprehension, vocabulary, word study, and writing skills.
- **Target population:** The program targets students in grades 6–12 who are reading one to three years below grade level, including students with varied needs such as English language learners. The three studies evaluated in this report include students who were at least two years below their current grade level, or scored below average on reading assessments.
- **Method of delivery:** *Passport Reading Journeys*™ is a reading curriculum that is delivered as a supplement to students' regular English language arts or reading instruction. Instruction includes a combination of whole-class instruction, small-group instruction, independent reading, video segments, and individualized computer-based practice.
- **Frequency and duration of service:** The *Passport Reading Journeys*™ curriculum is designed to be delivered daily for the entire school year.
- **Intervention components:** Four versions of *Passport Reading Journeys*™ are available, which are tailored to different grades and Lexile® levels: grade 6 (Beginnings), grade 7 (Level I), grade 8 (Level II), and high school (Level III). Each version includes several key components and features, as noted in Table 2.

**Comparison group:** In the three studies that contribute to this intervention report, students in the comparison group received a supplemental elective course that did not provide any literacy instruction.

**Table 2. Components of *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup>**

Key component	Description
Reading materials	Reading materials are organized into ten-lesson topical sequences called “expeditions,” which guide instruction in word study, fluency, informational and literary text, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and content-area reading. Each expedition sequence includes materials designed to engage students in a nonfiction topic such as forensics, space, money, the environment, the Internet, and archaeology. An optional reading bookshelf provides a collection of novels and magazines, each of which is assigned a reading level according to the Lexile <sup>®</sup> system. Reading materials can be delivered completely in digital format or through a combination of print and digital formats.
Whole-class instruction	To begin each expedition sequence, the teacher introduces the expedition topic to the class with a presentation. Teachers also provide whole-class instruction in eight of the ten lessons. Whole-class instruction includes (1) before-reading activities that introduce a topic or review the previous lesson; (2) reading activities that include close reading or re-reading passages with prompts, and (3) after-reading activities that include guided practice in comprehension, vocabulary, and writing.
Independent reading and technology-based practice	In each expedition, two lessons focus solely on independent practice, and three other lessons include additional practice. During independent reading, students have access to an online library of text selections (ReadingScape), which are organized by Lexile <sup>®</sup> score ranges. The online library includes animations and audio, and enables students to annotate, write, and bookmark digital materials. Students can also practice vocabulary independently using an online computer application (VocabJourney) that provides activities tailored to the needs of each student.
Collaborative student- and teacher-led small-group instruction	Three lessons in each expedition conclude with small-group word study. Small-group instruction includes teacher-guided modeling and think-aloud activities, writing practice, and the opportunity to receive immediate, corrective feedback.
Assessments	Assessments are embedded in the curriculum to enable teachers to monitor progress and differentiate instruction using an online data management system. Teachers can adjust instructional goals frequently using up-to-date information provided about how a student’s progress compares to typical rates of learning. Students’ scores on benchmark assessments determine their placements in the interactive online learning system and text library. To track student progress, all students complete benchmark assessments in reading three times per school year: at entry, mid-year, and exit. High school students also take semester exams that focus on vocabulary and comprehension strategies taught through the expeditions. Additional progress monitoring, including short comprehension and vocabulary assessments conducted once or twice per expedition, supports differentiated pacing through the program. The end-of-year exit evaluation identifies the reading skills and knowledge that students have gained as a result of the program.  Additional guided and independent practice is provided to students not reaching the mid-year benchmark. In addition to regular vocabulary and reading practice using VocabJourney and ReadingScape, the computer application PowerPass allows students to take practice assessments that consist of reading passages and corresponding questions.

## What Does *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup> Cost?

This preliminary list of costs is not designed to be exhaustive; rather, it provides educators an overview of the major resources needed to implement *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup>. The program costs described below are based on the information available as of June 2019.

- **Equipment and materials costs:** The *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup> classroom system for one reading achievement level, including the digital library and bookshelf, costs \$3,500. A classroom system without the bookshelf is \$2,800. Each classroom system includes one Teacher Resource Kit, which consists of the teacher editions of classroom materials, wall charts, and access to the data management system. In addition, optional student reading packs for each level cost \$69 per student, with a \$29 annual renewal fee. Each student reading pack includes student books, a student anthology, a word study book, and access to digital resources consisting of e-books, ReadingScape, VocabJourney, and Power Pass.
- **Personnel costs:** *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup> is delivered by a classroom teacher in addition to students’ regular reading and literacy instruction. The standard service package costs \$2,500 and includes one or two days of online or face-to-face training for all participating teachers at a school at the launch of the program; additional ongoing online product training and online support for teachers is available for \$250 per hour. School districts and schools can purchase additional services such as ongoing consultation, coursework on literacy instruction, and data analysis meetings.
- **Facilities costs:** The program is delivered in a classroom setting. Access to computers or handheld devices is needed. *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup> materials can be provided completely in digital format or through a combination of print and digital formats.
- **Costs paid by students or parents:** No information is available.
- **In-kind supports:** No information is available.
- **Sources of funding:** School districts or schools usually purchase *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup>.

**For More Information:**

**About Passport Reading Journeys™**

Cambium Learning Group, 17855 Dallas Parkway, Suite 400, Dallas, TX 75287

Web: <https://www.voyagersopris.com/>. Phone: (800) 547-6747

**About the cost of the intervention**

Web: <https://store.voyagersopris.com/passport-reading-journeys-with-updated-content/>

## Research Summary

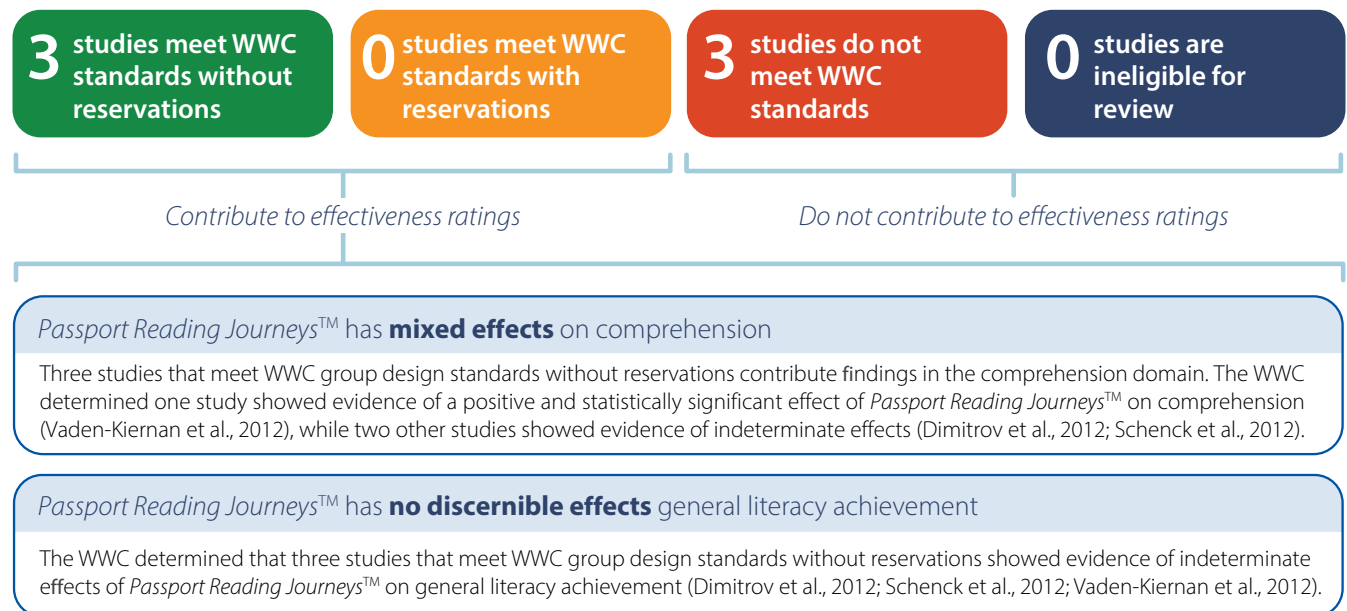
The WWC identified six studies that investigated the effectiveness of *Passport Reading Journeys™* (Figure 1):

- Three studies meet WWC group design standards without reservations.
- Three studies do not meet WWC group design standards.

The WWC reviews findings on the intervention's effects on eligible outcome domains from studies that meet WWC standards, either with or without reservations. Based on this review, the WWC generates an effectiveness rating, which summarizes how the intervention impacts, or changes, a particular outcome domain. The WWC reports additional supplemental findings, such as those the study authors reported separately by grade level, on the WWC website (<https://whatworks.ed.gov>). Both these supplemental findings and findings from studies that either do not meet WWC standards or are ineligible for review do not contribute to the effectiveness ratings.

Three studies of *Passport Reading Journeys™* that meet WWC group design standards reported findings on comprehension and general literacy achievement. These studies did not report findings on the following five outcome domains in the Adolescent Literacy topic area: alphabetics, reading fluency, writing conventions, writing productivity, and writing quality. Citations for the six studies reviewed for this report are listed in the References section, which begins on page 11.

**Figure 1. Effectiveness ratings for *Passport Reading Journeys™***



## Main Findings

Table 3 shows the findings from three *Passport Reading Journeys*™ studies that meet WWC standards. The table includes WWC calculations of the mean difference, effect size, and performance of the intervention group relative to the comparison group. Based on findings from the three studies that meet WWC standards, the effectiveness rating for comprehension is *mixed effects*, indicating evidence of inconsistent effects. These findings are based on 2,001 students. The effectiveness rating for general literacy achievement is *no discernible effects*. These findings are based on 2,316 students.

**Table 3. Findings from studies of *Passport Reading Journeys*™ by outcome domain**

Measure (study)	Study sample	Sample size	Mean (standard deviation)		WWC calculations			p-value
			Intervention group	Comparison group	Mean difference	Effect size	Improvement index	
<i>Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT; Dimitrov et al., 2012)</i> <sup>a</sup>	9th grade students	448	517.10 (23.65)	517.16 (25.82)	-0.06	0.00	0	.98
<i>GMRT (Schenk et al., 2012)</i> <sup>b</sup>	7th and 8th grade students	568	503.60 (24.49)	502.10 (27.79)	1.50	0.06	+2	.39
<i>Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation, (GRADE; Vaden-Kiernan et al., 2012)</i> <sup>c</sup>	6th and 7th grade students	985	84.65 (8.96)	82.27 (8.81)	2.38	0.27	+11	.00
<b>Outcome average for comprehension across all studies</b>						<b>0.11</b>	<b>+4</b>	
<i>EXPLORE Grade 9 Reading Test (Dimitrov et al., 2012)</i> <sup>a</sup>	9th grade students	514	11.99 (2.82)	12.34 (2.89)	-0.35	-0.12	-5	.17
<i>Virginia Standards of Learning – English/Reading (Schenk et al., 2012)</i> <sup>b</sup>	7th and 8th grade students	700	400.10 (49.79)	397.00 (50.13)	3.10	0.06	+2	.38
<i>Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (iLEAP)-English Language Arts Scale Score (Vaden-Kiernan et al., 2012)</i> <sup>c</sup>	6th and 7th grade students	1,102	254.43 (42.61)	251.91 (42.02)	2.52	0.06	+2	.25
<b>Outcome average for general literacy achievement across all studies</b>						<b>0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	

Notes: For mean difference and effect size values reported in the table, a positive number favors the intervention group and a negative number favors the comparison group. The effect size is a standardized measure of the effect of an intervention on outcomes, representing the average change expected for all individuals who are given the intervention (measured in standard deviations of the outcome measure). An indicator of the effect of the intervention, the improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +4 means that the expected percentile rank of the average comparison group student would increase by 4 points if the student received *Passport Reading Journeys*™. Some statistics may not sum as expected due to rounding.

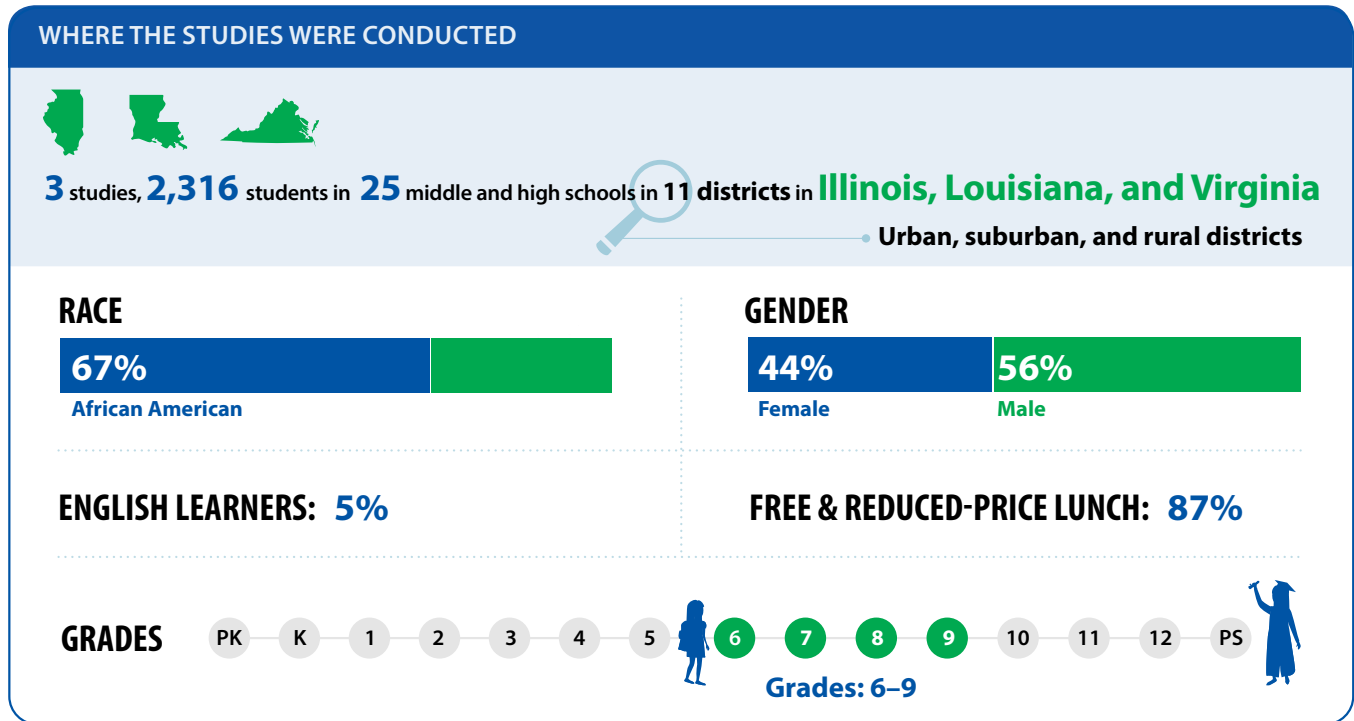
<sup>a</sup> Dimitrov et al. (2012) did not require any corrections for clustering or multiple comparisons nor difference-in-differences adjustments. The *p*-values presented here were calculated by the WWC, because the *p*-values reported in the study did not meet WWC criteria for reporting statistical significance when an analysis uses methods to address missing data. The unadjusted intervention group means and standard deviations presented here were provided in appendix A of the original study. The study is characterized as having indeterminate effects on comprehension and general literacy achievement because the mean effects reported are not statistically significant. For more information, please refer to the WWC Procedures Handbook, version 4.0, page 22.

<sup>b</sup> Schenk et al. (2012) did not require any corrections for clustering or multiple comparisons nor difference-in-differences adjustments. The *p*-values presented here were reported in the original study. The WWC calculated the intervention group mean by adding the adjusted mean difference reported in the study (a hierarchical linear modeling [HLM] level-2 coefficient, presented in the mean difference column) to the adjusted posttest mean from the comparison group. The study is characterized as having indeterminate effects on comprehension and general literacy achievement because the mean effects reported are not statistically significant. For more information, please refer to the WWC Procedures Handbook, version 4.0, page 22.

<sup>c</sup> Vaden-Kiernan et al. (2012) did not require any corrections for clustering or multiple comparisons nor difference-in-differences adjustments. The *p*-values presented here were reported in the original study. The WWC calculated the intervention group mean by adding the adjusted mean difference (a HLM level-2 coefficient, presented in the mean difference column) to the unadjusted posttest mean from the comparison group. This study is characterized as having a potentially positive effect on comprehension because the estimated effect is positive and statistically significant. The study is characterized as having an indeterminate effect on general literacy achievement because the mean effect reported is not statistically significant. For more information, please refer to the WWC Procedures Handbook, version 4.0, page 22.

## In What Context Was *Passport Reading Journeys*™ Studied?

The following section provides information on the setting of the three studies of *Passport Reading Journeys*™ that meet WWC standards, and a description of the participants in the research. This information can help educators understand the context in which the studies of *Passport Reading Journeys*™ were conducted, and determine whether the program might be suitable for their setting.



## Details of Each Study that Meets WWC Standards

This section presents details for each study of *Passport Reading Journeys*™ that meets WWC standards. These details include the full study reference, findings description, findings summary, and description of study characteristics. A summary of domain findings for each study is presented below, followed by a description of the study characteristics. These study-level details include contextual information on the study setting, methods, sample, intervention group, comparison group, outcomes, and implementation details. For additional information, readers should refer to the original studies.

### Research details for Dimitrov et al. (2012)

Dimitrov, D., Jurich, S., Frye, M., Lammert, J., Sayko, S., & Taylor, L. (2012). *Year one evaluation report/impact study: Illinois Striving Readers*. Arlington, VA: RMC Research Corporation.

Findings from Dimitrov et al. (2012) show evidence of indeterminate effects of *Passport Reading Journeys*™ in the comprehension and general literacy achievement domains (Table 4). These findings are based on one outcome per domain, with 448 and 514 students, respectively.

**Table 4. Summary of findings from Dimitrov et al. (2012)**

Outcome domain	Sample size	Meets WWC group design standards without reservations		
		Study findings		
		Average effect size	Improvement index	Statistically significant
Comprehension	448 students	0.00	0	No
General literacy achievement	514 students	−0.12	−5	No

**Table 5. Description of study characteristics for Dimitrov et al. (2012)**

<b>WWC evidence rating</b>	<b>Meets WWC Group Design Standards Without Reservations.</b> This is a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with low attrition. For more information on how the WWC assigns study ratings, please see the <a href="#">WWC Procedures and Standards Handbooks (version 4.0)</a> and <a href="#">WWC Standards Briefs</a> , available on the WWC website.
<b>Setting</b>	The study took place in six public high schools in four school districts in Illinois during the 2010–11 school year. All of the schools were Title I schools that had not made, or were at risk of not making, adequate yearly progress under the No Child Left Behind Act. The Striving Readers grant from the U.S. Department of Education funded the study.
<b>Methods</b>	The study authors identified 855 incoming ninth-grade students in the six participating high schools who met the eligibility criteria for the study. Each eligible student was matched to another similar eligible student, forming a pair. The authors then randomly assigned one student in each pair to receive the intervention and the other student to the comparison group so that 427 students were assigned to the intervention group and 428 students were assigned to the comparison group. The study examined the GMRT comprehension outcome for 232 intervention and 216 comparison students and the EXPLORE general literacy achievement outcome for 264 intervention and 250 comparison students. For both outcome measures, the sample loss after random assignment (attrition) was within the acceptable threshold for the review: the overall attrition rate was between 40% and 48%, and the differential attrition rate was between 3 and 4 percentage points.
<b>Study sample</b>	To be eligible for the study, ninth-grade students had to have taken the Grade 8 EXPLORE test (ACT, 2011) <sup>4</sup> and scored at the bottom two quartiles, and could not have an individualized education plan. Six teachers, one in each of the six schools, provided the intervention to the students assigned to the intervention group.  Of the students subject to random assignment, 58% were African-American, 5% were Hispanic, 30% were White, 43% were female, 85% were eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program, and 18% were receiving special education services.
<b>Intervention group</b>	Students in the intervention group received the <i>Passport Reading Journeys</i> <sup>TM</sup> program over the course of the 2010–11 school year. This supplemental intervention was offered during an elective period in addition to the regular ELA instruction, and involved daily lessons in reading skills related to science or social studies. The lessons were 50 minutes in duration (or 45 minutes when schools have 90-minute block scheduling). The lessons were organized into 14 ten-lesson expedition sequences, each two weeks long. Students also used two online tools available as part of <i>Passport Reading Journeys</i> <sup>TM</sup> : VocabJourney, a computer application for learning vocabulary words and improving comprehension skills at students' own pace, and ReadingScape, a library of books and texts students could use to practice their reading skills independently.
<b>Comparison group</b>	Students assigned to the comparison condition received the instruction in English language arts (ELA) that was already available in their schools and elective classes that did not provide any supplemental literacy instruction. The ELA instruction was available to both the intervention and comparison groups.
<b>Outcomes and measurement</b>	Study authors reported findings on two outcome measures that are eligible for review under the Adolescent Literacy topic area, both measured in spring 2011 after the intervention had been offered for nearly one school year: the GMRT, 4th edition, <sup>5</sup> and the reading component of the grade 9 EXPLORE test. The GMRT, a nationally normed reading assessment (one that compares students' performance to their peers nation-wide), was reviewed in the comprehension domain. The EXPLORE criterion-referenced test (one that measures student performance against a fixed set of standards) was reviewed in the general literacy achievement domain.  The study also reported findings for groups of students based on gender, ethnicity, special education status, eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch, and limited English proficiency status. These subgroup findings did not meet WWC group design standards because the study authors did not provide information on attrition separately for each group, nor was information available on the equivalence of the analytic intervention and comparison groups at baseline.
<b>Additional implementation details</b>	Cambium Learning Group, the developer of the intervention, provided professional development and support to the six teachers delivering the intervention. This professional development and support included a launch training, online product training, coursework on adolescent literacy, and ongoing consultation. The launch training consisted of two eight-hour sessions that instructed teachers on how to deliver the intervention with fidelity. The online training modules provided instruction in a self-paced, interactive environment and enabled teachers to search, annotate, and bookmark information they found valuable. Cambium also provided one-on-one support to teachers delivering the intervention through trained experts who visited each school to observe how the intervention was being implemented. The number of visits was determined by the needs of the teachers and the contract between each school district and Cambium. The launch training, the online product training, and the online support are included in the cost of the standard program package. The coursework, ongoing consultation, and coaching was conducted at additional cost to school districts or schools.

## Research details for Schenck et al. (2012)

Schenck, A., Jurich, S., Frye, M., Lammert, J., & Sayko, S. (2012). *Evaluation report/impact study: Virginia Striving Readers Intervention Initiative (VSRII)*. Arlington, VA: RMC Research Corporation.

Findings from Schenck et al. (2012) show evidence of indeterminate effects for *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup> in the comprehension and general literacy achievement domains (Table 6). These findings are based on two outcome analyses that involve 568 and 700 students, respectively.

**Table 6. Summary of findings from Schenck et al. (2012)**

Outcome domain	Sample size	Meets WWC group design standards without reservations		
		Study findings		
		Average effect size	Improvement index	Statistically significant
Comprehension	568 students	+0.06	+2	No
General literacy achievement	700 students	+0.06	+2	No

**Table 7. Description of study characteristics for Schenck et al. (2012)**

<b>WWC evidence rating</b>	<b>Meets WWC Group Design Standards Without Reservations.</b> This is an RCT with low attrition.
<b>Setting</b>	The study took place in nine middle schools in three urban school districts in Virginia during the 2010–11 school year. All of the schools were Title I schools that had not made or were at risk of not making adequate yearly progress under the No Child Left Behind Act. The Striving Readers grant program funded the study.
<b>Methods</b>	The study authors randomly assigned 918 seventh- or eighth-grade students who met the eligibility criteria for the study to the intervention group or to the comparison group. The random assignment was conducted separately within each grade and school. The study examined the GMRT comprehension outcome for 279 intervention and 289 comparison students and the Virginia SOL general literacy achievement outcome for 342 intervention and 358 comparison students. For both outcome measures, attrition was within the acceptable threshold for the review: the overall attrition rate was between 24% and 38%, and the differential attrition rate was between 1 and 5 percentage points.
<b>Study sample</b>	Seventh- or eighth-grade students enrolled in study schools were eligible for the study if they met at least one of the following conditions based on their test scores from the previous school year: (1) received a score on the GMRT that was equivalent to at least two years below their current grade level, or (2) did not reach the passing score on the Virginia SOL assessment. Students were excluded from the study if they had an individualized education program or if their parents requested that they be excluded. Nine full-time teachers, one in each of the nine schools, each delivered the intervention to two to six different classes.  Of the students subject to random assignment, 53% of students were seventh graders, 47% were eighth graders, 45% were female, 69% were African-American, 24% had a disability, 88% were eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program, and 9% were English learners.
<b>Intervention group</b>	Students in the intervention group received the <i>Passport Reading Journeys</i> <sup>TM</sup> program over the course of the 2010–11 school year. This supplemental intervention involved daily, 50-minute lessons in reading skills related to science or social studies. The lessons were organized into 15 ten-lesson expedition sequences, each two weeks long. The lessons included both teacher-led instruction and students' independent practice. Lessons typically started with whole-group instruction in which students were introduced to new vocabulary and a new reading passage. Then students could individually practice vocabulary using an online technology component, VocabJourney, or select books for independent reading from an online library of text selections, ReadingScape. Teachers also worked intensively with students in need of specific instruction during independent and paired reading time. Class size ranged from five to 21 students.
<b>Comparison group</b>	Students in the comparison group received the instruction in English language arts (ELA) that was already available in their schools and elective or enrichment classes that did not provide any supplemental literacy instruction. The standard ELA instruction was available to both the intervention and comparison groups.



<b>Outcomes and measurement</b>	<p>Study authors reported findings on two outcome measures that are eligible for review under the Adolescent Literacy topic area, both measured in spring 2011 after the intervention had been offered for nearly one school year: the GMRT total score and the Virginia SOL English/Reading scale score.<sup>6</sup> The GMRT was reviewed in the comprehension domain. The Virginia SOL assessment was reviewed in the general literacy achievement domain.</p> <p>The study also reported findings separately for students in grades 7 and 8 and for two GMRT subscales (comprehension and vocabulary). These supplemental findings are reported on the WWC website (<a href="https://whatworks.ed.gov">https://whatworks.ed.gov</a>) and do not factor into the intervention's rating of effectiveness.</p>
<b>Additional implementation details</b>	<p>The professional development and support included a launch training, online product training, coursework on adolescent literacy, and ongoing consultation. The intervention teachers also attended professional development training sessions, including online modules. In particular, they were required to attend 51 hours of professional development over the course of the school year, 30 of which were offered through web-based modules. In addition, trained experts from the developer, Cambium Learning Group, offered face-to-face professional development activities and coaching for intervention teachers. The launch training, the online product training, and the online support are included in the cost of the standard program package. The coursework, professional development training, and coaching was conducted at additional cost to school districts or schools.</p>

### Research details for Vaden-Kiernan et al. (2012)

Vaden-Kiernan, M., Caverly, S., Bell, N., Sullivan, K., Fong, C., & Atwood, E. (2012). *Louisiana Striving Readers: Final evaluation report*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED595145>.

Findings from Vaden-Kiernan et al. (2012) show evidence of a positive effect of *Passport Reading Journeys*<sup>TM</sup> in the comprehension domain (Table 8). This finding is based on an outcome analysis that includes 985 students. The finding on literacy achievement, which shows evidence of an indeterminate effect, is based on an outcome analysis that includes 1,102 students.

**Table 8. Summary of findings from Vaden-Kiernan et al. (2012)**

		<b>Meets WWC group design standards without reservations</b>		
		Study findings		
Outcome domain	Sample size	Average effect size	Improvement index	Statistically significant
Comprehension	985 students	+0.27	+11	Yes
General literacy achievement	1,102 students	+0.06	+2	No

**Table 9. Description of study characteristics for Vaden-Kiernan et al. (2012)**

<b>WWC evidence rating</b>	<b>Meets WWC Group Design Standards Without Reservations.</b> This is an RCT with low attrition.
<b>Setting</b>	The study took place in ten middle schools in four districts in Louisiana during the 2010–11 school year. Participating schools were in a mix of rural, urban, and suburban settings. All schools were Title I schools and had sufficient numbers of struggling readers in participating grades to support the study. The Striving Readers grant program funded the study.
<b>Methods</b>	The study authors randomly assigned sixth- to eighth-grade students in study schools who met the eligibility criteria for the study to the intervention group or to the comparison group. The random assignment was conducted separately within each grade and school. The authors conducted an additional round of random assignment for a group of eligible students who had newly enrolled in study schools. Overall, the study randomly assigned 720 students to the intervention group and 717 students to the comparison group. The study examined the GRADE comprehension outcome for 485 intervention and 498 comparison students and the iLEAP ELA general literacy achievement outcome for 548 intervention and 554 comparison students. For both outcome measures, attrition was within the acceptable threshold for the review: the overall attrition rate was between 23% and 32%, and the differential attrition rate was between 1 and 2 percentage points.

<b>Study sample</b>	<p>Sixth- to eighth-grade students in study schools who performed below proficiency levels on the Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (iLEAP) during the previous school year were eligible for the study. There were ten intervention teachers; one in each school.</p> <p>The students subject to random assignment were largely split between sixth (48%) and seventh (47%) grades, with a small number of students in eighth grade. Seventy-one percent of students were Black, 24% were White, and the remainder were of other races. Forty-three percent of the sample was female, 15% of students were classified as requiring special education, 4% had limited English proficiency status, and 88% were eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program.</p>
<b>Intervention group</b>	<p>Students in the intervention group received the <i>Passport Reading Journeys™</i> program over the course of the 2010–11 school year. This supplemental intervention was implemented over 15 two-week blocks. Teachers provided 50-minute lessons in small classes, aiming to complete 15 expeditions (containing ten lessons each) during the school year. Students worked with teachers on literacy four days a week, and on the fifth day they played interactive online literacy games. On average, teachers completed 11.4 expeditions. Ninety percent of teachers taught class periods that lasted approximately 45 to 50 minutes. The average student-to-teacher ratio was 13:1.</p>
<b>Comparison group</b>	<p>Students in the comparison condition received standard ELA instruction and an elective course that provided no additional literacy instruction (such as band, foreign languages, art, physical education, and supplemental math). The standard ELA instruction was available to both the intervention and comparison groups.</p>
<b>Outcomes and measurement</b>	<p>Study authors reported findings on two outcome measures that are eligible for review under the Adolescent Literacy topic area, both measured in spring 2011: the GRADE<sup>7</sup> and the iLEAP.<sup>8</sup> The GRADE, a standardized norm-referenced test, was reviewed in the comprehension domain. The iLEAP ELA and reading assessment is a state-administered test that falls in the general literacy achievement domain.</p> <p>The study also reported findings separately for subscales of the outcome measures and for student subgroups. Subscale findings for GRADE comprehension, GRADE vocabulary, and iLEAP reading are on the WWC website (<a href="https://whatworks.ed.gov">https://whatworks.ed.gov</a>) and do not factor into the intervention's rating of effectiveness. Student subgroup findings based on grade, race, and eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch did not meet WWC standards because the study authors did not provide information on attrition separately for each group, nor on the equivalence of the analytic intervention and comparison groups at baseline. The study also reported findings for a measure of students' motivation to read, but the WWC did not review findings for this outcome measure because it does not fall within an eligible outcome domain in the Adolescent Literacy topic area.</p>
<b>Additional implementation details</b>	<p>Teachers in the intervention group had at least three years of demonstrated effective classroom instruction and were trained in the <i>Passport Reading Journeys™</i> curriculum. The professional development and support included a launch training, online product training, coursework on adolescent literacy, and ongoing consultation. Trained experts from the developer visited each school to observe how it was implementing the intervention, with the number of visits determined by the needs of the teachers and the contract between each school district and Cambium. The launch training, the online product training, and the online support are part of the program package included in the basic program cost. The coursework, professional development training, and coaching was conducted at additional cost to school districts or schools. Throughout the school year, teachers also received support from principals and project staff from the Louisiana Department of Education. The authors described that overall, the intervention was implemented at a medium to high level of adequacy across the study schools.</p>

## References

### Studies that meet WWC group design standards

- Dimitrov, D., Jurich, S., Frye, M., Lammert, J., Sayko, S., & Taylor, L. (2012). *Year one evaluation report/impact study: Illinois Striving Readers*. Arlington, VA: RMC Research Corporation.
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### Studies that do not meet WWC group design standards

- 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, Inc. The study does not meet WWC standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention.
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- Wolgast, M.S. (2008). *A study of the effect the Voyager Passport Reading Journeys Program has on 9th grade student reading achievement based on the measure of Academic Progress Assessment*. (Doctoral Dissertation, Baker University). The study does not meet WWC standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention.

## Endnotes

\* In February 2020, the WWC revised some student demographic information in the figure on page 6 of this intervention report. The WWC did not modify any other information originally included in the November 2019 release of this report.

<sup>1</sup>The descriptive information for this intervention comes from the product website and overview: [https://www.voyagersopris.com/docs/default-source/literacy/passport-reading-journeys/prj-overview.pdf?sfvrsn=5ff59a45\\_2](https://www.voyagersopris.com/docs/default-source/literacy/passport-reading-journeys/prj-overview.pdf?sfvrsn=5ff59a45_2). The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) requests developers review the intervention description sections for accuracy from their perspective. The WWC provided the developer with the intervention description in February 2019, and the WWC incorporated feedback from the developer. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this intervention is beyond the scope of this review.

<sup>2</sup>The literature search reflects documents publicly available by December 2018. Reviews of the studies in this report used the standards from the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbooks (version 4.0) and the Adolescent Literacy review protocol (version 4.0). The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions could change as new research becomes available.

<sup>3</sup>The comprehension domain encompasses two constructs: reading comprehension and vocabulary development, as described in the Adolescent Literacy review protocol (version 4.0).

<sup>4</sup>ACT. (2011). *EXPLORE technical manual*. Iowa City, IA: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Explore-TechManual.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>MacGinitie, W.H., MacGinitie, R.K., Maria, K., & Dreyer, L.G. (2002). *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests: Technical report*. Rolling Meadows, IL: The Riverside Publishing Company.

<sup>6</sup>Virginia Department of Education. (2005, January). *Virginia Standards of Learning, technical report: 2003-2004 administration*. Richmond, VA: Author.

<sup>7</sup>Williams, K. (2001). *Group reading assessment and diagnostic evaluation technical manual*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Services.

<sup>8</sup>Louisiana Department of Education. (n.d.). *iLEAP English Language Arts and Reading tests*. Retrieved from <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/assessment>.

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