

Florida Center for Reading Research

Destination Reading

What is Destination Reading?

Destination Reading is a K-3 computer-assisted instructional reading program designed for whole class, small group, or individual instruction as a supplement to another reading curriculum already in use. It is available to schools in several formats, including the internet, CD-ROM, the school's Local Area Network server, or the district's portal. *Destination Reading* was developed in 2001, based on recent reading research and meta-analyses of the research conducted by the federal government. It is aligned with the Florida Sunshine State Standards and consists of two courses. A K-1 course includes 17 units that cover emergent literacy, phonemic awareness, phonics, automatic word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension strategies, decodable text, various types of fiction and nonfiction text, and writing activities. A 2-3 grade course consists of 24 units that cover advanced phonics, comprehension, word study, writing, grammar, research skills, reading for task-oriented purposes, and experience with a variety of writing genres. A Learning Management System accompanies the program to facilitate teachers' decision-making regarding assignments for individual students or small groups. It is important to note that *Destination Reading* will soon have completed correlations between their Learning Management System and several core reading curricula that Florida schools are using.



A student spends approximately 20 minutes per day engaged with the software. Worksheets for students accompany each unit for concept and skill reinforcement. Curriculum units are organized in a whole-part-whole structure, in which skills are presented in context, then taught and practiced separately, and then re-presented in the context of a whole reading passage.

Is Destination Reading aligned with Reading First?

Destination Reading has been specifically designed to be consistent with the five critical elements of reading instruction documented by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Phonemic awareness and phonics are both systematically and explicitly taught. Children learn letter names and sounds through song, rhyme, and manipulative activities, and learn to identify those sounds in words. They are taught to blend sounds into words, to interpret diphthongs and blends, and provided practice with these skills by reading decodable text. Fluency instruction is implemented by offering students a variety of support for reading text. The child can choose to have specific words read, or entire pages, or, at the teacher's discretion, read-alone text can be prescribed for a student, which offers no auditory support from the computer. Sight words and the reading of companion printed material (soon-to-be-released accompanying books) are practiced as well. Vocabulary is taught both directly and in context, and vocabulary activities accompany each reading passage. Comprehension is taught by having children connect the text to their own experience, formulate questions, use graphic and semantic organizers, and monitor their own comprehension when reading. The structure and features of various genres of writing are explicitly taught as they occur in the program. Writing extension activities are provided, but writing skills are not specifically taught.

Two days of professional development are offered to implementers of the program, as well as two days of technical support. There is both a leader-led training and a web-based training tutorial. On-going support is available from full-time *Destination Reading* consultants in the district.

Research Support for Destination Reading



Destination Reading is a new program, built on recent research findings and field tested from May-June, 2002. A third-party evaluator has been commissioned to conduct a large-scale study of the project from September 2002 to July 2003. The publisher of *Destination Reading*, Riverdeep, will recruit the treatment classrooms, help them install the hardware and software, and train the teachers but will not be involved in data collection or analysis. The investigative study will involve 900 children in grades K-2 and will have both treatment and control classrooms.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *Destination Reading*:

- The program is comprised of well-structured, highly engaging, explicit lesson units for instruction.
- *Destination Reading* is designed to be a flexible tool in the teacher's hands, supplementing the needs of the students as individuals, small groups, or a class as a whole. The teacher makes active decisions regarding which units to implement with which children; though the curriculum follows a definite scope and sequence, it does not proceed automatically through this progression.
- *Destination Reading* offers a strong emergent literacy unit, specifically covering topics such as letters, words separated by spaces, punctuation, whole sentences, left to right directionality in reading, and the alphabetic principle, among others.
- A variety of audio-voices and cultures are represented in the program.
- The program is built on principles of reading instruction substantiated through research as being effective.

Weaknesses of *Destination Reading*:

- *Destination Reading* is a new product that does not have data regarding its effectiveness, however, Riverdeep has hired an independent evaluator to conduct a large-scale investigation of the program's impact on reading during the 2002-2003 school year.

Which Florida counties have schools that implement Destination Reading?

Destination Reading is not currently in use in Florida county school systems.

For More Information

<http://www.riverdeep.net>

References



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Date Posted: December, 2002

Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

For more information about FCRR go to: www.fcrr.org