

Georgia Middle School Achievement and Classworks

Executive Summary

Curriculum Advantage, Inc. and Classworks recognize the unique challenges with Middle School Achievement in Georgia. This analysis identifies some of those challenges and describes Classworks and the specific ways it can help to provide solutions. An overview of the features and benefits of the Classworks Program, as well as an explanation of the instructional design are included to clarify how Classworks can support increased student achievement.

Challenges for Georgia Middle Schools

The State of Georgia continues to meet key educational challenges, including reducing dropout rates, raising academic achievement levels, increasing teacher effectiveness, and meeting the needs of an increasing share of non-English-speaking students. Proudly, Georgia showcases success in education through leadership, aggressive use of technology, and making student achievement top priority. While Georgia has consistently reduced the overall number of schools in Needs Improvement status, a large portion of the school sites that are not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are Middle Schools. The commitment to ensure that all Georgia children are learning emphasizes the need for special solutions at this level.

Georgia educators are aware of the impact of technology on the digital generation, and how it can increase achievement because it is truly an integral part of these students' lives. With both ends of the middle level spectrum – 5th and 8th grade – having promotion and retention tied to CRCT results, there is the potential for technology to have a great impact on middle school success. Classworks, a technology solution that can offer on-grade-level and lower level content that keeps middle level students engaged and motivated, can provide this type of positive instructional impact.

What is Classworks?

Classworks is a unique, diagnostic/prescriptive reading and math curriculum that combines engaging software and a powerful management system to support data-driven decision making; completing the loop between informed instruction and student performance results - turning data driven instruction into data driven results.

Classworks' Comprehensive reading and math curriculum includes:

- More than 180 top software titles from leading publishers aligned to the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC), Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)
- Over 10,000 activities supporting the GPS
- Over 1,650 skills and concepts sequenced by grade level and subject and aligned to the GPS
- More than 4,000 hours of interactive, standards-based, managed activities
- More than 7000 items in the Benchmarking Assessment
- Expanded academic enrichment opportunities in the form of cross-curricular projects that are ideal for enrichment

How Can Classworks Help Georgia Middle Schools Meet the Challenge

Challenge – 5th and 8th Grade CRCT Proficiency

Georgia's Promotion, Placement, and Retention legislation requires that students in 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade pass the CRCT in order to advance to the next grade level. The law mandates that schools provide accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction to students prior to the CRCT retest for those students with low achievement on the initial assessment. Both 5th and 8th grade retention based on CRCT results has a great impact on middle school success, as these grades represent the entrance and exit levels to middle school, and places increased pressure on students, teachers, and parents to increase achievement levels. Classworks provides the instruction to ensure that student performance based on the Georgia Performance Standards, and assessed on the CRCT, will improve.

Solution – Instruction that meets the intervention needs of the CRCT Retest

- **Accelerated Instruction**
Classworks units utilize multiple approaches to teach children with engaging activities specifically designed to improve student performance in reading and math.
- **Differentiated Instruction**
Classworks offers the ability to import your students Criterion-Referenced Competency Test scores into Classworks and automatically receive individualized learning paths for every student based on specific areas of need. Classworks contains curriculum from 180 different software titles – so you know objectives are being addressed multiple ways.
- **Additional Instruction**
Classworks has successful implementations in extended day and summer school programs that have been demonstrated to improve student academic achievement.

Challenge – New Standards

The new Georgia Performance Standards include the following four components, designed to show what each child should know and be able to do to show their understanding and mastery of the curriculum:

- Standards – goal of the content
- Tasks – activities demonstrate what students know
- Student Work – what it takes to meet standard
- Teacher Commentary – communication between student & teacher

Solution – Classworks aligned sequences and CRCT Import

Classworks helps educators bridge the gap during the transition from the QCC to the GPS, keeping in mind the Georgia Textbook Adoption Cycle and the change of focus of the CRCT. Because of the Classworks alignment to the QCC, GPS, and the CRCT, teachers are able to select the sequence of instruction that meets their needs. For example:

- Teachers can assign units of instruction in Classworks, knowing they are preparing students for this year's CRCT and next year's GPS classroom – simultaneously
- Teachers have over 4,000 hours of instruction and 10,000 activities available to fill in any gaps created with the textbook adoption cycle

Classworks has a CRCT import allowing student results to be imported directly into the program, automatically creating and prescribing individualized learning paths for each student – based on their results and tailored to their instructional needs. The student then immediately starts working within Classworks on their prescribed learning path. Classworks curriculum also integrates the four components of the performance standards into the instructional process with clear reporting of student progress and results.

Classworks has a number of features and benefits that are ideally suited to promoting student success and improved academic achievement at the Middle School level:

An academic core of rigorous curriculum and instruction

Classworks has more than 180 software titles from leading publishers, 8,600 activities, and more than 4,000 hours of interactive, standards-based, managed activities. Each unit includes instruction, practice, assessment, and a real-world project.

- In mathematics, students are taken from beginning level skills for pre-algebra and algebra through mastery of advanced mathematics concepts.
- In language arts, once students have mastered reading skills and are fluent readers, they are taken through more advanced language, literature, writing, and communication skills.

Demonstrated success in a variety of implementations

- On grade level skill practice in the classroom
- Intervention for struggling students in extended day and summer school programs
- Remediation in building block skills
- Individualized instruction and practice
- Practice for the CRCT
- Extended day and extended year intervention for the CRCT retest
- GPS mastery

Curriculum aligned to Georgia Performance Standards

Classworks' Georgia Edition is specifically aligned to GPS and the CRCT. Projects with each unit give students the opportunity to apply their knowledge to real-world situations, ensuring mastery of each specific objective.

Classroom practices that engage students in their learning

Classworks includes best of breed curriculum, differentiated instruction, and sound unit structure based on best practices demonstrated to keep students enthusiastically engaged in every stage of the learning process.

Data-driven decision making and Informed Instruction

Classworks assessment tools diagnose student weaknesses and automatically prescribe individualized learning paths. The extensive management and reporting system encourages close progress monitoring, providing detailed student progress reports. The Classworks import utility imports students' state assessment scores and automatically creates individual learning paths to address each student's needs.

Algebra Mastery Series

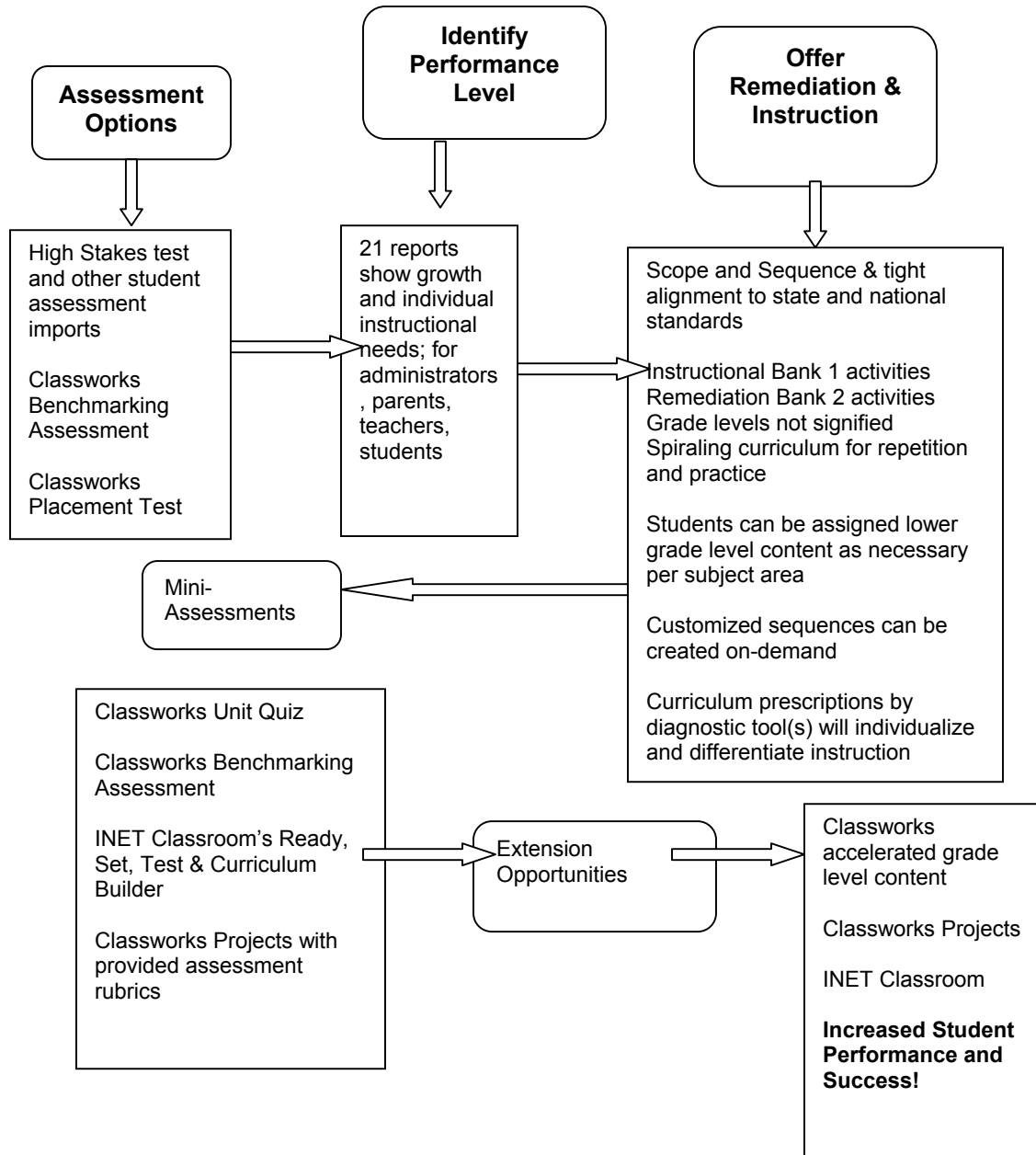
Classworks has units with building block skills through pre-algebra and algebra I. A solid foundation in these skills is critical for student success in mastering standards and successful performance on statewide assessments

Innovative use and integrations of technology for learning

Classworks is a technology-based curriculum that can be fully integrated into classroom instruction and individual student learning – improving student achievement and playing to the strengths of the digital generation.

Instructional Structure of Classworks

The structure of Classworks is based on an instructional unit containing an anticipatory set, best of breed activities that provide reinforcement and practice for the learning objectives of the unit, a quiz to determine mastery, and remediation if needed. With additional assessment options to diagnose the specific learning needs of each individual student and prescribe the appropriate instruction, and real-world projects to promote higher order thinking skills and critical thinking, Classworks is a complete instructional solution for learners at all levels.

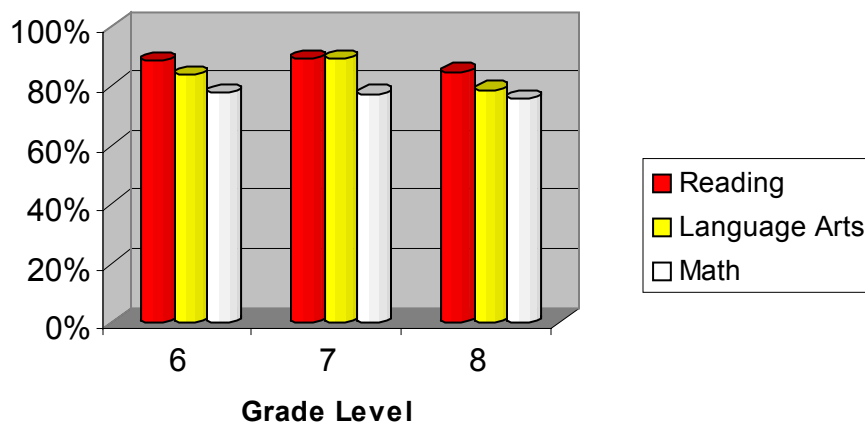


Success!

Following a successful summer school implementation where students realized tremendous academic gains, Classworks was implemented district-wide in Houston County for the 2004-05 school year.

During the first full year of implementation, students at Perry Middle School used Classworks. 89% of the 7th grade students met or exceeded proficiency on the CRCT in reading and language arts for the 2004-05 school year, a significant improvement over previous gains.

Perry Middle School Students Meeting/Exceeding Proficiency



High-Stakes Test Success

Recently, educators in Houston County discovered that there was a direct correlation between student performance results within Classworks and those on the state standardized test- the CRCT.

- 75% of the students scoring 80% or above on Classworks also scored 350 or above on the 2005 Fifth Grade Math portion of the CRCT.
- 100% of students scoring 70% or above on Classworks also scored 327 or higher on the 2005 Fifth Grade Math portion of the CRCT.
- 67% of the students scoring 62% and below received a score of 314 or lower on the 2005 Fifth Grade Math portion of the CRCT.

These results confirm that Classworks prescribes the 'right' curriculum and the progress-monitoring component provides an accurate measure of future student performance on high stakes tests.

"Classworks pinpointed those borderline students. There is a direct correlation between Classworks scores and CRCT scores."

Chris McPhail, Instructional Technology Coordinator
Houston County Schools, Georgia

Summary

Engaging, Meaningful, and Relevant Content

- Aligned to the QCC, GPS and CRCT
- Engaging content with award-winning software and best-of-breed curriculum, providing differentiated instruction
- Interdisciplinary Projects to tie in real-world applications and support higher order thinking skills
- The ability to target and remediate a middle school student with content that engages them while addressing lower level skills
- Sound unit structure based on best practices to teach, track, and/or remediate
- Language Learner Series - comprehensive language instruction for students with limited English proficiency, learning disabilities, or those in need of remediation
- INET Classroom – web based resource and reference tool

Ease of Use in Managing and Monitoring Student Progress

- Assigns activities to each student based on areas of need
- Data to Instruction – import of student results from the CRCT, turning results into an individualized learning path
- Diagnostic/Prescriptive ~ multiple assessment opportunities drive creation of learning paths
- Classwork Benchmarking Assessment to complete the loop between informed instruction, student activities, assessment results, and accountability
- Individualize instruction by student, group, grade, or school needs
- Targeted instruction ~ Assign curriculum by standard, benchmark or skill
- Enhanced communication for informed instructional decisions

Conclusion

Working with the Classworks solution, educators are able to access the resources that they need to assess, diagnose, prescribe, and implement the best educational plan for each individual student. Using resources backed by scientifically based research, Classworks provides teachers with an educationally sound program that addresses students' multiple learning styles and academic needs.

Continuous tracking of student progress combined with the ability to re-assess student needs and re-evaluate prescribed learning paths gives Classworks users the flexibility required to always be aware of and to address students' academic challenges. In addition, the extensive reporting system contained in Classworks provides documentation of the educator's data driven decisions and allows a means of communication to parents and administrators. This solution provides the tools for all students to succeed in Georgia Middle Schools.

To learn more about how Classworks can help your students, please visit us at www.curriculumadvantage.com, or call 1-800-411-4337.