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The Science of Reading and the Use of Decodable Texts in the Classroom

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SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

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The Science of Reading and the Use of Decodable Texts in the Classroom

The United States is facing a national crisis that, if not addressed soon, could have a detrimental impact on the future of the country. In 2022, only 33% of the nation's fourth graders scored *proficient* or higher on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading exam (NAEP, 2022). The impact of reading is integrated into all aspects of human life. Not only is the ability to read essential for academic achievement, but it has also been noted to impact physical, social, and emotional health. Because reading has been proven to have such an outstanding impact on all aspects of life, great efforts have been made to understand and explain the process of how the brain learns to read. Louisa Moats (2023) stated, "Reading has been the most researched aspect of human cognition." If reading is the most researched aspect of human cognition, then why are 67% of children in the United States not reading at or above grade level expectations? To answer this question, attention should be directed towards current instructional practices and the research that informs them. As scientists and educators have examined instructional practices, they have found that the most commonly utilized methods are not conducive to how the brain actually learns how to read. Arkansas, along with 31 other states, has chosen to address this issue by implementing practices based upon the *Science of Reading* research (Schwartz, 2022).

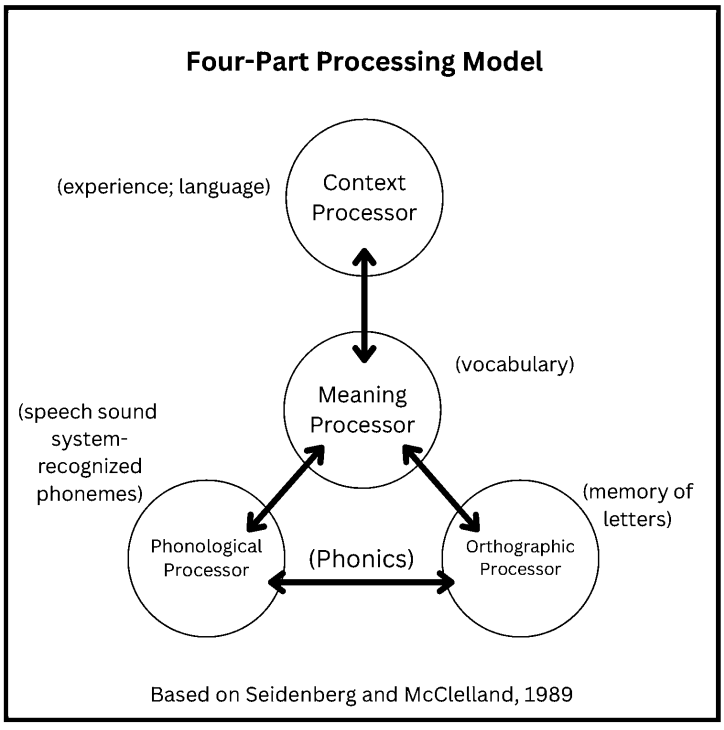
The Science of Reading

The Reading League defines the *Science of Reading* as "a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing" (The Reading League [TRL], 2021). This body of knowledge is composed of over 50 years of studies conducted by researchers in the fields of Cognitive Psychology,

Communication Sciences, Developmental Psychology, Education, Special Education, Implementation Science, Linguistics, Neuroscience, and School Psychology (TRL, 2021). The convergence of interdisciplinary studies seeks to scientifically answer the questions: "How does the brain learn to read?" and "How can teachers effectively identify, diagnose, and prescribe intervention for struggling readers?"

The Four Part Processing Model

Through the use of fMRI screenings, scientists have been able to identify the areas of the brain used for reading. One of the greatest conclusions drawn from brain-based studies is that unlike speaking, reading is not a natural ability. In order to attach phonemes, the smallest units of sound in spoken language, to graphemes, the smallest unit of meaning in written language, pathways from the phonological processor to the orthographic processor must be made. These pathways are most effectively developed through explicit instruction and deliberate practice, as opposed to through immersion (TRL, 2021). Mark S. Seidenberg and James L. McClelland are well renowned *Science of Reading* researchers who focused largely on word recognition and naming. Seidenberg and McClelland summarized their findings of how the brain learns to read into the *Four Part*



Processing Model for Word Recognition (1989). This model deals with four processors in the human brain: the phonological processor, the orthographic processor, the meaning processor, and the context processor. The function of the phonological processor is to recognize sounds in spoken language. The process of recognizing spoken language sounds begins in the mother's womb. In the English language, there are 44 phonemes. It is the responsibility of the phonological processor to recognize the sounds and store them in memory. The orthographic processor serves the purpose of letter recognition and memory. Many children are introduced to the 26 letters of the English language before beginning pre-school. In reading instruction, the process of associating letters with speech sounds is called phonics. In order for the preliterate brain to associate spoken language sounds to print, pathways from the phonological processor to the orthographic processor must be formed through explicit and systematic phonics instruction. The meaning processor deals with the vocabulary that a person has learned. Vocabulary is learned through both explicit instruction and implicit instruction within day to day interactions. The context processor takes the meanings of words from the meaning processor and uses previous experiences and knowledge of language to determine which meaning of the word is appropriate for the context.

In order to decode any word in the English language, the reader must have all of the phonemes within the word stored in their phonological processor. Not only must the reader have knowledge of all of the phonemes, but also all of the graphemes within the word, which are stored in the orthographic processor. For example, the word "jam" can be broken up into the phonemes /j/, /ă/, and /m/. Say that a particular reader knows all of the graphemes within the word "jam", knows the phonemes /j/ and /m/, and lacks the

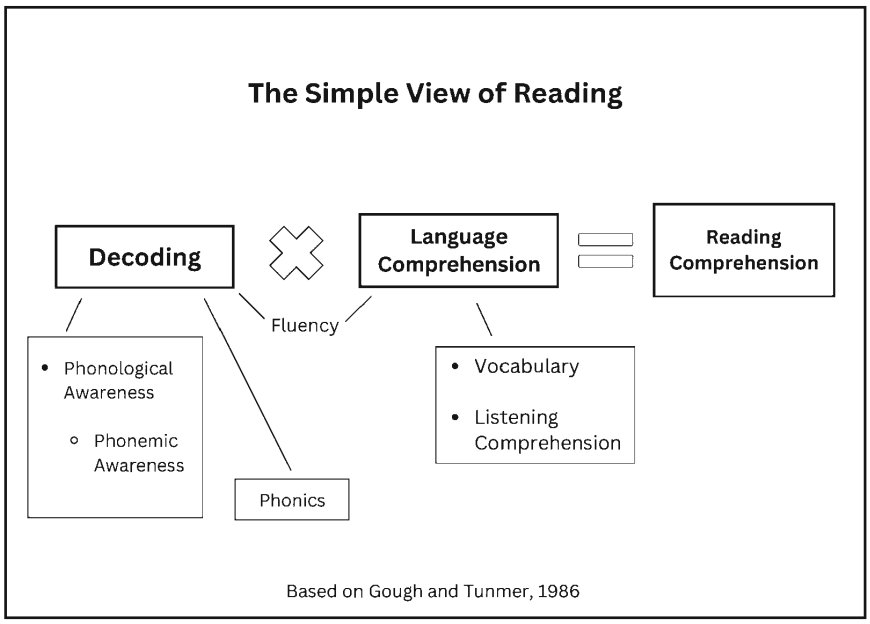
knowledge of the phoneme /ă/. As the reader approached the second sound in the word, they would not be able to continue decoding because they do not have the knowledge of the phoneme /ă/ within their phonological processor. In order to decode a word, the reader must know all of the graphemes and phonemes within the word as well as the correct association between the graphemes and phonemes, which is learned through phonics instruction.

The *Four Part Processing Model for Word Recognition* aids in understanding how the brain decodes words as well as how the brain processes the meanings of words. After a reader successfully decodes a word such as "jam", the brain activates the meaning processor where vocabulary is stored. Say that the reader has the following definitions of the word "jam" stored; "improvised music", "a food", "a predicament", "to squeeze tightly", and "to make unusable". The meaning processor will access all definitions, and within a matter of milliseconds, refer to the context processor. As the word "jam" reaches the context processor, the brain begins to recall all of the contexts in which the reader has been exposed to the word. Then, the processor considers the context in which the word is being used in the particular situation. Say that the sentence in the text was "Jack was in a jam, because he forgot to do his homework." If the reader has the meaning "a predicament" stored within their meaning processor, they will be able to use the context of the sentence to determine the intended meaning of the word "jam." However, say that the reader only had the meaning "a food" stored. While this noun form of the word would be grammatically acceptable within the sentence, the reader would not grasp the intended meaning of the sentence.

Due to being supported by the *Science of Reading* research, Siedenberg and McClelland's *Four Part Processing Model for Word Recognition (1989)* is not only useful for understanding how the brain decodes and determines the meaning of words, but also is a useful tool in guiding reading instruction and interventions.

The Simple View of Reading

Created in 1986 by Philip B. Gough and William E. Tunmer, the *Simple View of Reading* is a model that demonstrates the relationship between the components of reading comprehension: decoding and language comprehension. In this mode, the multiplicative relationship between the two components indicates that in order to be successful at reading comprehension, a reader must have both the ability to decode the text and to comprehend language. If a zero were to be substituted for either factor, decoding or language comprehension, the product of the equation would be zero. This also indicates that in order for a reader to have strong reading comprehension abilities, both components of the equation have to be strong.



Gough and Tunmer define decoding as "fast and accurate reading of familiar and unfamiliar words in both lists and connected text" (1986). Gough and his partner Wesley Hoover later simplified the definition to "efficient word recognition" (1990). As

demonstrated in the *Four Part Processing Model*, decoding is a skill that must be taught. Gough and Tunmer highlight three necessary areas of decoding instruction within their model: phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics. The Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) defines phonological awareness as "the ability to notice the sound structure of spoken words" (2017). It is crucial that emerging readers are aware that spoken words are made up of sounds before they attempt to decode. Phonemic awareness is a subcategory of phonological awareness that deals with the individual sounds in a spoken word. DESE defines phonemic awareness as "the ability to identify, isolate, and manipulate language at the individual sound level" (2017). Students must not only be able to hear and identify all of the individual sounds within a word, but they also be able to manipulate them. A student that has a strong phonemic awareness will be able to segment and blend phonemes by the end of first grade (DESE, 2017). Phonological and phonemic awareness deal only with the auditory component of decoding. As students are mastering identifying the sounds of the English language, they will also begin to learn the association of letters and sounds. "Phonics is a system for approaching reading that focuses on the relationship between letters and sounds" (DESE, 2017). Through systematic and explicit direct instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics, students are able to strengthen their decoding skills.

As Gough and Tunmer illustrate in their model, decoding is not the only factor in the reading comprehension equation. While decoding is essential for reading, without language comprehension, the decoded text will have no meaning. *The Simple View of Reading* focuses on two main areas of language comprehension: vocabulary and listening

comprehension (Gough and Tunmer, 1986). Vocabulary is "the knowledge of words and word meanings" (DESE 2017). Children learn vocabulary both implicitly through their environment and explicitly through direct instruction. Listening comprehension is the ability to understand spoken language. An example of a listening comprehension exercise would be that a student listens to a story being told and is able to retell key events and details of the story. Expanding a reader's vocabulary and increasing their listening comprehension abilities will result in stronger language comprehension capabilities.

In the *Simple View of Reading* equation, fluency is a bridge between the two components decoding and language comprehension. Fluency is "the ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression" (DESE 2017). Fluency develops as a reader increases their sight vocabulary as well as their decoding and language comprehension abilities. Although both components (decoding and language comprehension) are essential for reading comprehension, the ways in which they are learned are different, which explains the complexity of teaching reading. Alan G. Kahmi thoroughly explains the difference between the two in his article *Knowledge Deficits: The True Crisis in Education* (2007). Kahmi writes "Word recognition is a teachable skill; comprehension is not a skill and is not easily taught. Word recognition is teachable because it involves a narrow scope of knowledge (e.g., letters, sounds, words) and processes (decoding) that, once acquired, will lead to fast, accurate word recognition" (2007). With regards to comprehension, Kahmi writes, "comprehension, in contrast, is not a skill; it is a complex of higher-level mental processes that include thinking, reasoning, imagining, and interpreting. Comprehension is difficult to teach because these processes are domain- or content-specific rather than domain- or content-general" (2007).

In their model, Gough and Tunmer illustrate that a students' reading comprehension capabilities are the product of the strength of their decoding and language comprehension abilities. In order for a student to have strong reading comprehension, they must also have strong decoding and language comprehension capabilities.

The Big Five

In 1997, congress appointed a National Reading Panel (NPR) to review over 100,000 reading research studies in order to determine the most effective methods for teaching reading (Woolridge, 1997). The results were used to develop the nation's reading instruction program "No Child Left Behind"; however, this program ignored many of the key recommendations from the NPR (Woolridge 1997). This is partially why the nation has experienced such a reading crisis. The panel submitted their final report in 2000 which identified five essential components for reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. (Woolridge 1997). The Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has recognized the need for effective, scientifically based reading instruction and has created the Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E) in an effort to meet this need (DESE, 2022). As educators have evaluated what scientifically based reading instruction entails, they have all circled back to the Big Five. Schools in Arkansas and throughout the nation are now in the process of implementing *Science of Reading* research aligned instruction that emphasizes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary development with the goal of more students achieving grade level, or above, reading comprehension abilities.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the most precise sub-skill of phonological awareness, yet it is one of the most crucial components of laying a firm foundation for success in reading. DESE defines phonemic awareness as "the ability to identify, isolate, and manipulate language at the individual sound level" (DESE, 2017). Phonemes are the individual units of sound in a language. For any language that deals with an alphabet, it is essential that the reader is able to understand that there is a difference between letters and phonemes. For example, the letter *b* is not a phoneme, rather the letter designated to represent the phoneme /b/. Manipulating phonemes includes the ability to blend, segment, isolate, delete and substitute individual units of sound. The ability to blend phonemes means that a reader can be presented with individual phonemes and successfully blend them to create a whole word. For example, if a student was presented with the phonemes /b/ /a/ /t/, they should be able to correctly blend the sounds to create the word *bat*. Segmenting phonemes is the exact opposite action of blending. It is where a student is given a word and can successfully break apart the word into the individual units of sound. For example, if the student were able to perform this skill, when asked to segment the word *bat*, they would respond with the phonemes /b/ /a/ /t/. DESE claims that generally, students should master the ability to blend and segment sounds by the end of first grade (2017).

In addition to segmenting and blending, there are some more advanced skills that can indicate a student's level of phonemic awareness. Isolation is the ability to hear a word and identify an individual unit of sound within the word. For CVC words, this includes the initial, medial and final sounds. If a student was given the word *bat* and

asked to identify the medial sound, the correct response would be the phoneme /a/. Deletion is the ability to remove a phoneme from a word. If a student was given the word *bat,* and asked to delete the initial sound they would be left with the word *at.* Finally, phoneme substitution is the ability to remove and replace an individual unit of sound in a word. If a student was given the word *bat* and asked to substitute the medial sound for the phoneme /o/, the new word would be *bot.* While advanced skills such as isolation, deletion and substitution can provide valuable information about a student's level of phonemic awareness, core reading instruction mainly emphasizes blending and substitution.

Phonics

As beginning readers are gaining an understanding that spoken language is made up of individual units of sound, they are often also in the process of learning the letters of the alphabet. The National Reading Panel writes that "an essential part of the process for beginners involves learning the alphabetic system, that is, letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns, and learning how to apply this knowledge in their reading" (NICHD, 2000). This letter- sound correspondence is taught through systematic phonics instruction. DESE defines phonics as "a system for approaching reading that focuses on the relationship between letters and sounds" (2017). As explained by Seidenberg and McClelland in the *Four Part Processing Model for Word Recognition*, phonics instruction is the bridge between the phonological processor and the orthographic processor (1989). As students are able to connect written letters to phonemes through the process of orthographic mapping, they are adding to their sight vocabulary: "all of the words you instantly recognize" (DESE, 2017). The National Reading Panel writes that "Phonics

instruction is a means to an end. And, that end is reading connected text" (NICHD, 2000). As students learn the associations between letters and sounds, they are able to apply the skill in their reading of connected texts. Phonological awareness and phonics instruction are the basis of a code-emphasis approach to reading. This is a key differential element between *Science of Reading* research based approaches and *whole language* approaches that are based upon guessing using context.

Fluency

As noted in the *Simple View of Reading* fluency acts as the bridge from decoding skills, such as phonemic awareness and phonics, to language comprehension skills; therefore, resulting in reading comprehension (Gough and Tunmer, 1986). DESE defines fluency as "the ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression" (2017). The term *accurately* means that the reader is able to decode the word and access the correct meaning of the word on the first attempt. If a reader has developed strong orthographic mapping skills as illustrated in the *Four Part Processor for Word Recognition*, fluency can be developed through reading practice. However, if a reader is still struggling to make connections in the orthographic mapping process, they are likely not going to be able to achieve accuracy. Incorrect practice will lead to the development of incorrect habits. Fluency is developed through accurate practice of decoding words and accessing meanings of those words. Another key component of fluency is the speed of reading. If a student is reading the text too slow or too fast, they will experience difficulty remembering what was read. Teachers can model appropriate rate and fluency to students through class read-alouds or other oral reading activities.

Fluency is necessary for comprehension. Whenever a reader uses too much of their working memory to decode the words on the page, they are not going to remember what they read or what it meant. As a student develops fluency, they are better able to devote their attention to comprehending the text; therefore, providing more opportunities for higher level interactions with texts (DESE, 2017).

Vocabulary

"Vocabulary is the glue that holds stories, ideas, and content together making reading comprehension possible for children" (DESE 2017). As children are interacting with their environment and listening to spoken language, they are developing their vocabulary, even before they are able to speak. A child's vocabulary deals largely with their socioeconomic status. "By the age of 3, there is a 30 million word gap between children from the wealthiest and poorest families (DESE 2017). Vocabulary is essential for reading comprehension. Successfully decoding a word in a connected text is only helpful for comprehension when the meaning of the word is accessible to the reader.

Morphology is one method of vocabulary instruction that has the capability to unlock the meaning of countless words. Morphemes are the smallest units of meaning within a word. Morphology is "the study of segmenting words into prefixes, suffixes, roots, or bases and the origins of words" (DESE, 2017). The English language contains many words that include recurring prefixes, suffixes, roots, and bases. If a reader knows the meaning of a single morpheme, they are likely capable of inferring the meaning of many words that include that specific morpheme. Teaching readers to identify common morphemes is one way to expand their vocabulary.

Vocabulary is learned both implicitly as the reader is interacting with the world, and explicitly, as they are directly taught. In their research, the National Reading Panel concluded that explicit vocabulary instruction is crucial for developing readers (NICHD, 2000). There are three tiers of vocabulary words. Tier one words consist of the most basic words that often do not require direct instruction. Many students come to school with a knowledge of these words. Some examples of tier one words include *happy, cow,* and *food.* Tier three words are those that are domain specific and are often not used in daily communications. Some examples of tier three words include *parabola, monarchy,* and *electrolyte.* Tier two words are also known as *high frequency words* which are commonly understood by mature language users. Some examples of tier two words are *concluded, identified,* and *claimed.* Award winning researcher Isabella Beck writes that "instruction in these (tier two) words can add productively to an individual's language ability" (2002). Beck also provides a practical insight for choosing which tier two words would be helpful to add to a student's repertoire. She writes that teachers should consider if the word is one that the student can represent with words that they already know. If this is the case, the word would be helpful in providing a more "precise or mature" way of referring to the idea that they already know about (Beck, 2002). The majority of vocabulary instruction in the classroom should focus on these tier two words. While it is arguable that a person's vocabulary never stops developing, greater vocabulary knowledge leads to greater success in reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the end goal of reading instruction. The National Reading Panel claims that "reading comprehension is a cognitive process that integrates

complex skills" and that in order for it to be understood, one must examine the skills it is composed of (NICHD, 2000). Explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary all work together to promote successful reading comprehension. Explicit instruction is clear and precise. Systematic instruction has a clear scope and sequence, or order in which the information is presented. First, readers must be able to hear and recognize the individual sounds of spoken language. As beginning readers learn to manipulate those sounds, phonics instruction connects the sounds to written letters and works to develop the alphabetic principle. Through accurate and meaningful practice decoding words, fluency is developed. Fluency acts as the bridge between decoding and language comprehension skills. A reader's vocabulary is built upon through both implicit and explicit instruction, which leads to stronger reading comprehension. As illustrated in the *Simple View of Reading,* reading comprehension, the ability to understand written text, is developed as readers strengthen their decoding and language comprehension skills through systematic and explicit instruction and meaningful practice.

The *Science of Reading* research promotes systematic and explicit instruction in all of the domains of the Big 5. Arkansas school districts who have implemented R.I.S.E are provided options by the State Department for choosing a curriculum that aligns with the *Science of Reading* research. As teachers are modifying their practice to focus on the Big 5, they are employing pedagogies that provide explicit instruction and meaningful opportunities for students to practice the skills and concepts they are learning. One strategic resource that teachers use to provide opportunities for intentional decoding and phonics practice is decodable texts.

Decodable Texts: Definition and Use in the Classroom

Decodable texts are useful tools that compliment *Science of Reading* research-aligned instructional methods. These texts are "simple books that focus on a specific grapheme-phoneme correspondence that has been taught" (Five From Five, n.d.). In order for the text to be considered *decodable,* 64% of the words must follow the alphabetic code that the reader has learned up until that point (Reading Rockets, n.d.). The remainder of the words that are not decodable are typically listed in the front of the book for the teacher to take note of. Decodable texts provide opportunities for the emergent reader to practice the blending and segmenting skills that they are learning while minimizing the frustration of becoming stuck on a word that they do not know how to decode.

The main purpose of decodable texts is to support reading instruction. *Science of Reading* aligned instruction should follow a specific scope and sequence. Schools have the opportunity to choose from several *Science of Reading* aligned curriculums that typically provide a scope and sequence for early reading instruction. Some examples include *Fundations- Wilson Language Training Corporation* and *Sonday- Windsor Learning*. In order to assure that the books are truly decodable, the authoring companies will often choose a scope and sequence to align their text series with. After choosing a scope in sequence, the company will choose a specific point in the scope and sequence to align their book to. Teachers are able to choose decodable texts to use in their classroom based upon what scope and sequence their school is using. In order to appropriately choose a decodable to use, the teacher must check that the book is aligned to the point in the scope and sequence in which they have given instruction. Decodable texts can be

provided to individual students as an opportunity to practice the grapheme-phoneme correspondences that they have learned. They can also be strategically used in group interventions as the scope and sequence allows. It is most important that the teacher chooses texts that only contain the specific grapheme-phoneme correspondences that the students know.

One of the greatest benefits of using decodable texts in the classroom is the development of automaticity. Through repetition and accurate, meaningful practice, decodable texts allow readers to strengthen their recognition of specific grapheme-phoneme correspondences. By seeking to eliminate guessing based upon context or illustrations, decodable texts force the reader to rely on the decoding skills that they have learned. This element of such texts is largely why they are supported by bottom-up, *Science of Reading* research aligned approaches. Through the use of decodable texts, teachers can boost students' confidence in their reading capabilities as the frustrations of unknown words are generally eliminated and opportunities for correct and meaningful practice are provided.

Conclusion

The diligent implementation of *Science of Reading* research aligned practices has the potential to move the Nation towards seeing a higher percentage of children achieving grade-level or higher reading comprehension abilities. As educators and researchers have examined current reading instructional practices, it has been concluded that changes must be made to the way reading is being taught in the classroom in order to see meaningful progress. The *Science of Reading* research provides valuable information for educators about how the brain learns to read. Diligently implementing *Science of Reading* informed

instruction that emphasizes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension is the crucial next step the nation must take, in order to see a much needed change in the literacy rate of its students, and in turn, its future.

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The Creative Process

Before beginning my thesis writing hours, I conducted a directed study about the Science of Reading and decodable texts. In short, the Science of Reading research answers the question, "How does the brain learn to read?" While conducting research about instructional methods that are aligned with this body of research, I discovered decodable texts. I instantly was intrigued by the concept of a book that is almost 100% decodable for young readers at their individual skill level. My favorite benefit of these books is that they help to eliminate the frustration of coming upon an unknown letter-sound correspondence while reading. Too many times, students lose interest in learning to read because they find it to be a challenging task. By eliminating the frustration of unknown letter-sound correspondences, decodable texts are a tremendous resource that teachers can use to provide phonics practice for emergent readers. The Lord has given me a passion to minister to children with special needs and those in need of additional academic support. The Science of Reading research helps teachers diagnose and pinpoint specific areas of struggle that students have. This allows them to create specific and targeted interventions that can help struggling readers make strides towards achieving grade level performance.

The first step that I took in creating the book was to choose a scope and sequence to align it with. Whenever a school chooses a phonics and reading instructional curriculum, they typically come with a scope and sequence that provides an order in which teachers teach certain letter-sound correspondences. The scope and sequence that I chose to align my book with is the *Flyleaf Emergent Reader Scope and Sequence.* This document can be found at https://flyleafpublishing.com/phonics-scope-sequence-and-book-previews/

After this, I chose a target letter-sound correspondence: short /e/. What sets decodable texts apart from other leveled texts is that they contain very few words that the student is not able to decode. In order to determine what words a student can decode, one must consider the point in the scope and sequence in which the student has received instruction. After choosing the point short /e/ on the scope and sequence, I had to make a list of the previously taught skills. This list included the sounds /s/, /m/, short /a/, /c/, /n/, /k/, /ck/, /t/, /p/, short /o/, /g/, /d/, short /i/, /r/, /l/, /h/, /f/, and short /e/. This means that my book was not allowed to have any sounds that are not listed above. At first, I manually worked towards creating a list of possible words for my book. Then, I determined that this was a daunting task and decided to search for a word list generator. I found

an online generator (www.phonicswordlist.com) in which I could enter all of the sounds that I was allowed to use in my book, and it came up with a total of around 180 words. Almost all of these words were two or three letter CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. (List of words attached at the end of this section) After reviewing the words list, I began to think about a theme or moral for the story that could be written using the available words. Whenever I decided on the moral of welcoming and including others, I began to write the words of the story. I wanted to have emphasis on the letter-sound correspondence of short /e/, so I decided to give my characters names that contained a short /e/. Drafting the text for the book took a great deal of time, given that I only had 180 three-letter words to not only choose from, but also to create a moral out of. I tried my best to use as many words that contained short /e/ as possible. The storyline that I came up with was about a red hen named Meg. She is wet, the sun has set, and she is looking for a dry place to stay the night. As she walks up to the house, she meets a new friend: a pet named Ben. He can not let her in the house because he is a pet, and Meg is not. After looking around a while longer, Meg notices a pen out behind the house. As she approaches the pen, she notices that there is a cat, a bat, a rat, and a ram inside. She asks if she can get in, and the

animals reply “In this pen, all can fit in.” My intent behind the moral of this story is that readers will be encouraged to welcome and include everyone. I intentionally chose a wide variety of animals to be inside the pen to show the readers that just because someone does not look like them, does not mean that they can not accept them and show kindness toward them. I chose this moral because of my passion to love and serve students with special needs.

After writing the text of the book, I met with the illustrator, Abby Davis, my cousin. I shared with her the ideas that I had, and told her to take creative freedom while designing the illustrations. Abby created the illustrations on her IPad using the program FireAlpaca and emailed them to me. After making the finishing touches to the illustrations, I uploaded them to Canva.com and started a file for the pages of my book. This file included the title page, dedication page, text, illustrations, and teacher resources, all in the order that they will appear in the book. The teacher resource pages include the target skill, previously taught skills, a high frequency words list, a decodable words list, discussion questions, and activity ideas. After the manuscript file was completed with all of the contents of the book, I began the process of publishing the book with Kindle Direct Publishing. This company allows you to publish a book for free and list it

on Amazon.com. After entering the Title and description of the book, I uploaded the manuscript file and cover file to the designated links on the site. After all of the files were uploaded, I used the previewing tool to ensure that all of my text and images were going to be within the margins of the printed books. I ended up editing the files several times because the text was too close to the margins. When the file was formatted to fit within the page margins, I approved the book and moved on to set the pricing. I wanted to sell the books at printing price; however, Amazon would not allow me to so that they could earn money off of the book. The print price was $3.60, and the minimum sale price was $6.00. I am allowed to order as many copies that I would like at print price. Additional copies can be purchased at the sale price of $6 at the following link. https://a.co/d/8eEKdTw I intend to split the profit of any orders with Abby.

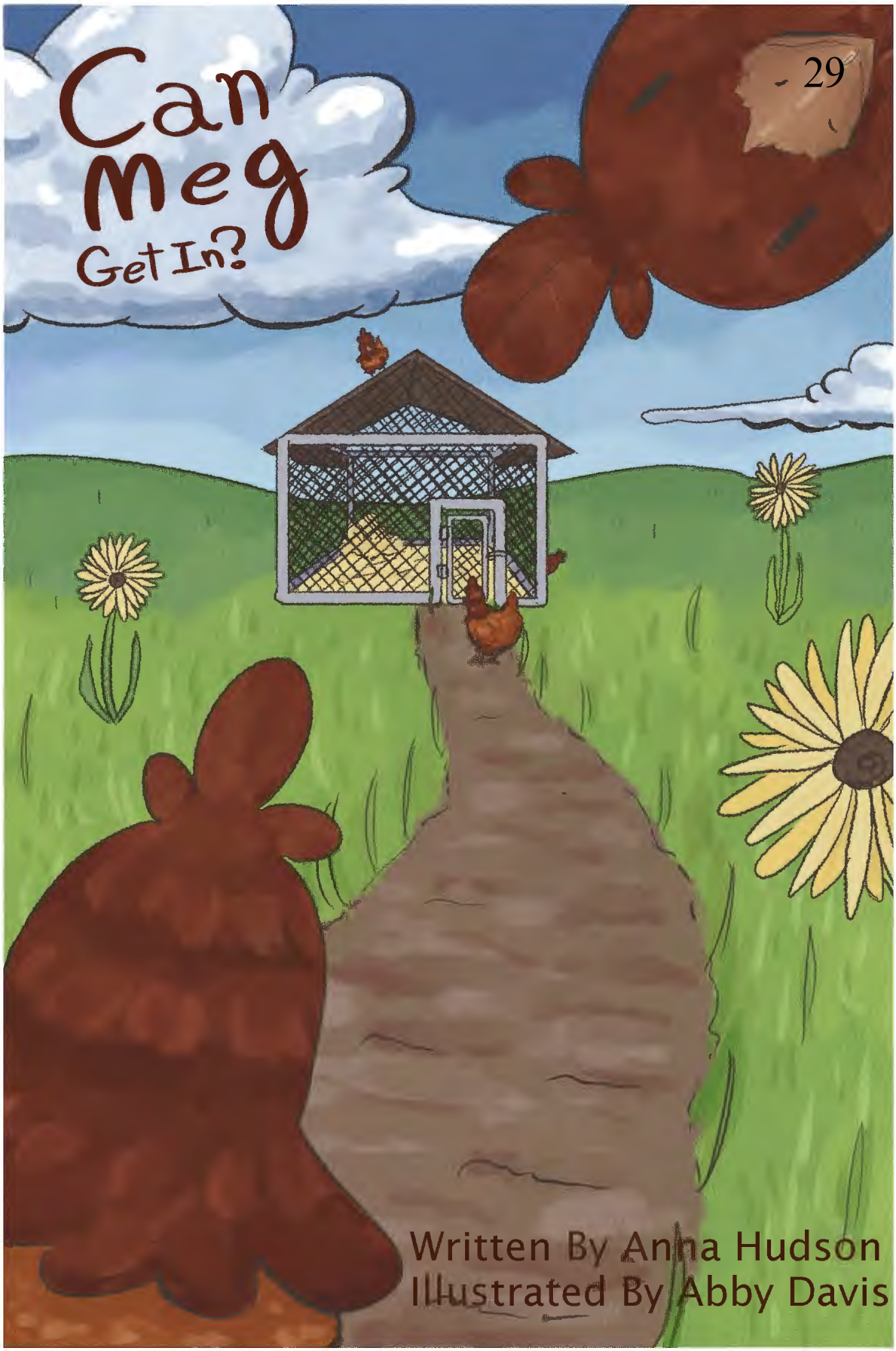
The process of writing my book has been an enjoyable learning experience. I learned that much more goes into the writing of a decodable text than I had originally thought. The limiting of available sounds leads to the limiting of the number of words available to be used in the book. Not only was creating a logical story difficult, but it was also even more difficult to create a logical story with a moral that is near to my heart as a special education teacher: accepting

and welcoming all. I do not care that my book sells 100s of copies, or even 1. I am more excited to use this resource in my classroom as I create a learning environment that models that of the Master Teacher, one that is loving, patient, kind, and welcoming to all students.

Word List

cog	tap	let	tin	hog	bin	tip	nun	cop	neck	rid	but
wit	get	gum	nick	mob	bug	mud	sun	pot	had	bad	jug
men	net	pen	lack	tad	cab	hub	nip	nag	rim	did	lock
bib	sap	jab	tack	sock	pop	job	rot	cot	gag	bag	tag
muck	dock	tub	dad	fit	bid	sip	map	lab	cob	pin	sad
lid	nap	kick	sick	hop	rug	sat	run	tug	sob	hen	hack
jog	pat	lad	leg	top	cut	dip	lap	beg	log	rag	bit
met	den	cub	dot	bat	wick	cat	bed	hub	sag	jock	fig
mat	peg	hug	sit	rig	hip	hat	dig	lob	rack	rub	dud
sack	set	jack	wed	mug	lit	fib	hut	hit	nut	red	mop
rob	rip	tuck	pick	pad	tick	fun	rat	sub	rib	kit	bun
lag	hid	bud	wig	hot	him	tab	pig	dug	gob	ten	dim
buck	gap	peck	pack	led	back	fog	lot	dab	luck	jig	beck
fed	rock	wet	rap	bet	jet	not	dog	sum	pit	wag	mock
deck	kid	win	cap	lick	pet	big	puck	fin	duck		

Word list generated by www.phonicswordlist.com


Can Meg Get In?
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Written By Anna Hudson
Illustrated By Abby Davis

Can Meg Get In?

A Decodable Text

Written by Anna Hudson
Illustrated by Abby Davis

This honors thesis project is dedicated to
Dr. Kathy Collins, who has left a remarkable legacy of selflessly sharing
Christ's love with her students

and to

Dr. Carrie Sharp, who has inspired me to carry out my calling as an
educator wholeheartedly with joy each and every day.

Meg is a red hen.

Meg is wet, and it is dim.

Ben is a pet. He is not wet.


BEN

Ben can not let Meg in.

In the back, there is a pen.

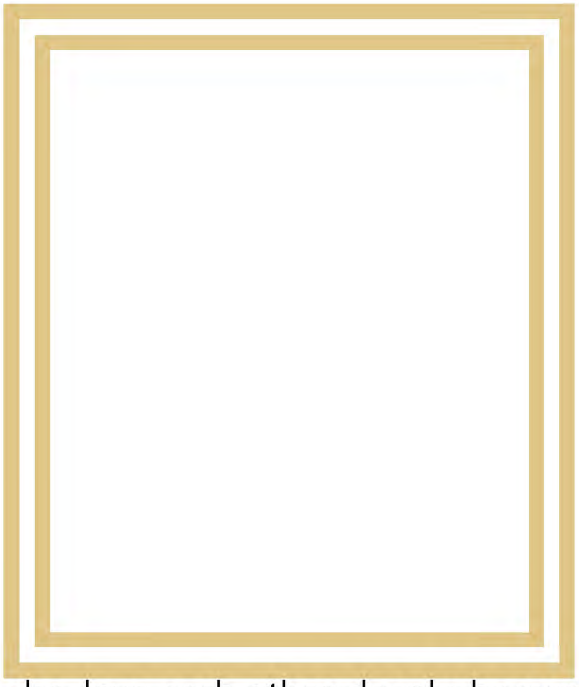
Can Meg get in?

A pig, a bat, a ram, and a cat sit in the pen.


In this pen,

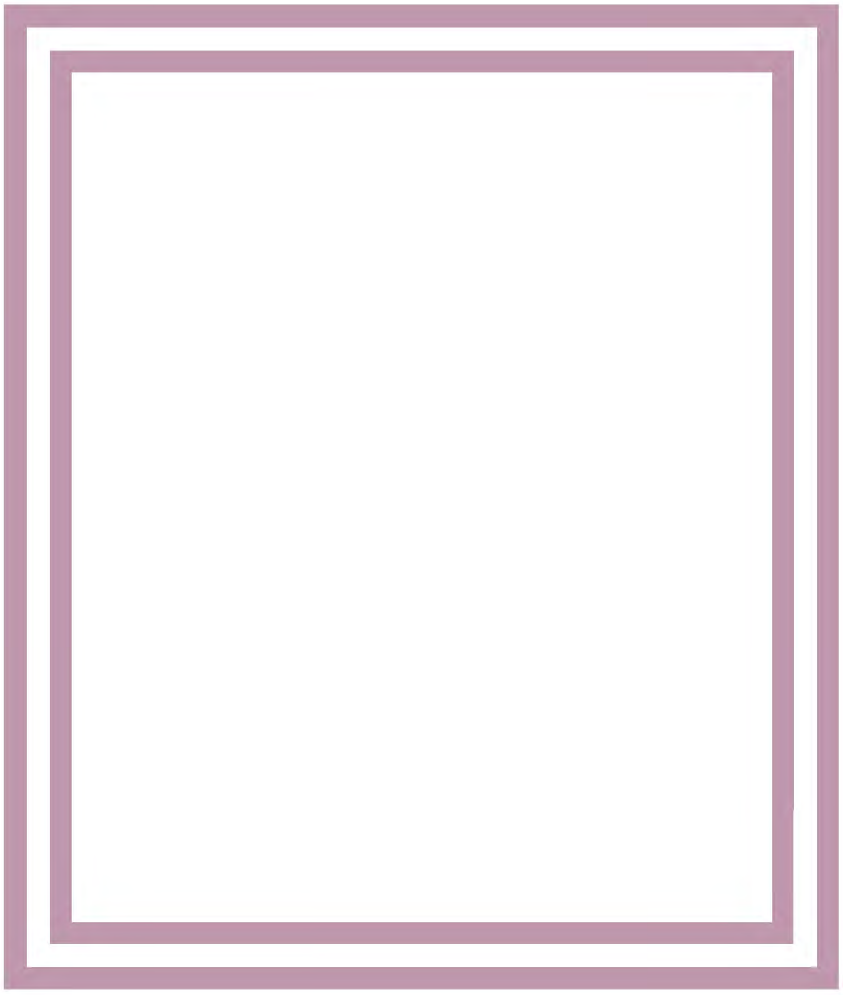

all can fit in.

About the Author



My name is Anna Grace Hudson, and I am a Spring '24 graduate of Ouachita Baptist University. My major is in Elementary (K-6) education with a certification in special education. The verse that I make my best effort to live by is 1 Peter 4:8 "Above all else, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of wrongs." I believe that the Lord has called me to share His love with His children through the field of special education. I also believe that each and every child deserves to be given the resources and support they need in order to succeed academically, and beyond. Students with special needs are no exception. It is my desire to share the love of Christ with those students who are often overlooked or outcasts through the way I strive to meet their educational and social/emotional needs to the best of my abilities.

About the Illustrator



Abby likes to start and end her day with a glass of milk. She is majoring in accounting at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma. During her free time, she likes to draw and spend time with her friends and family. She dreams of one day living in a little cottage like one from a fairy tale.

A Note for the Teacher

Dear Teacher,

Thank you so much for your dedication to loving on little hearts and teaching little minds. *Can Meg Get In?* is a decodable text intended to provide phonics practice for emergent readers, specifically practice with the short e letter-sound correspondence. Decodable texts support direct, explicit phonics instruction by providing repetitive opportunities for students to practice the target skill. This text can be utilized in many settings including whole class, small group, or individual phonics practice. It is my hope that this book will be useful tool as you teach young readers. On the following pages, you will find teaching resources that accompany the book such as a list of decodable and high frequency words, discussion questions, and activity ideas that support the target phonics skill and the theme of the book. I hope that your students enjoy this story that shares what I believe to be an important theme: accepting and welcoming all.

Sincerely,
Anna Grace Hudson

Teacher Resources

Target skill: short e

Previously taught skills*: /s/, /m/, short /a/, /c/, /n/, /k/, /ck/, /t/, /p/, short /o/, /g/, /d/, short /i/, /r/, /l/, /h/, /f/, short /e/

High Frequency Words

he there all

Decodable Words

Meg	wet	pet	back	rat	the
is	and	not	pen	ram	this
a	it	can	get	sit	fit
red	dim	let	pig	I	bat
hen	Ben	in			

*This book is 90% decodable at point 15 on the *Flyleaf Emergent Reader Scope and Sequence.*

Flyleaf Publishing. (2016). Emergent Reader Scope and Sequence. Decodable Books: Research Based Readers - Flyleaf Publishing. https://flyleafpublishing.com/phonics-scope- sequence-and-book-previews/

Teacher Resources

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is the main character of the story?
2. What is the main problem of the story?
3. Why is Meg trying to find a place to stay?
4. If you were Meg, how would you feel?
5. If you were Ben, would you let Meg inside?
6. Why is it important that we make everyone feel welcome?
7. How can you make someone feel welcome at school?

Activity ideas:

- Invite students to clap or stand each time they hear the short /e/ sound in *Can Meg Get In?*
- Write all short /e/ words on an anchor chart
- Students draw one way that they can welcome or include someone at school
- Students write and act out a short play scene where they are demonstrating a way that they could welcome or include others
- Students create posters to hang in the hallway promoting the idea of including and welcoming all