

Curriculum Plus Publishing & the Science of Reading

We are sometimes asked whether our publishing program aligns with the Science of Reading. Our response is “yes” for the following reasons:

In addition to phonics and phonic decoding, the Science of Reading underscores the importance of instruction in *other essential components* of language and literacy such as encoding, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. For young learners to develop these skills, they must be exposed to a *wide variety of resources* – resources which build *both* foundational skills (e.g. controlled/decodable texts) *as well as* vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension skills (e.g. informational texts, narrative texts, poetry). *

Our early reading series features varied fiction and nonfiction text types including narrative, recount, report, procedural, explanation, traditional tales and humour. We believe that there is nothing intrinsic to any of these texts which is in any way antithetical to the precepts of the Science of Reading. On the contrary, as at least one SOR teacher advocate has noted, “there are Science of Reading practices that could and should be implemented when reading ANY text”. ** A well-informed teacher will have no difficulty in knowing when and how to support the above-mentioned essential skills when using any of these texts. To assist the process, beginning with our 2 photographic nonfiction series – the “Little Porcupine” collection and the “Little Porcupine *Plus*” collection – we have provided downloadable book-specific teaching resources focussing on phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Moreover, we are advising that these 2 series (among others) provide opportunities for students to practice and reinforce the decoding skills they are learning – while using *less controlled* texts.

Recently, we have observed a tendency to view all “levelled texts” as SOR non-aligned. We disagree. At Curriculum Plus, we have always been somewhat ambivalent about book levelling. Overwhelming market demand from the educational community, however, ultimately compelled us to provide the various levelling designations in our catalogues and promotions. In our view, the books can just as easily be organized into grade level sets, and/or by theme/topic. In any event, our research into the issue continues to reveal statements such as the following: “*There is no need to dump all those (expensive) levelled books out. They have a time and place. When used to support guided instruction, silent reading, pair work, and family story time, you’ll convert them into valuable tools for building equity and improving literacy outcomes for all your students.*” ***

We trust that our existing and prospective customers will assess the relationship between our publishing program and the Science of Reading in light of the considerations noted above. We believe that both the curriculum goals of educators and the learning outcomes of students are best served as a result.

* Joint Statement: Understanding the Difference: The Science of Reading and Implementation for English Learners/Emergent Bilinguals (Els/EBs), The Reading League Summit

** Wendy Darasz & Jen Yagid, *Informed Literacy: The Science of Reading and Leveled Readers*

*** Lynne Kulich, The NWEA Education Blog: How to use leveled books, March 1, 2022