HMH's Responses to The Reading League's Curriculum Evaluation of HMH Into Reading v3

Introduction

HMH appreciates The Reading League's thoughtful review and recognition of *HMH Into Reading's* alignment with the science of reading and evidence-based literacy practices. We thank reviewers for the time, expertise, and professionalism dedicated to the evaluation of curriculum materials.

We also appreciate the opportunity to provide a publisher response that gives additional information on the instructional design of *Into Reading*. Additional information on the underlying research that informed our program design can be found in the Into Reading Research Evidence base.

With approvals in more than 34 states, HMH *Into Reading* has become a leading choice for districts looking to implement a literacy program that is aligned to the science of reading. The measurable literacy gains associated with Into Reading reflect how the program helps educators drive student growth in an affirming learning environment that makes each and every student feel respected, important, and proud.

Responses

1A: Word Recognition

The Reading League Criteria and Score	
1.2: Guidance is given to memorize any whole words, including high-frequency words, by sight without attending to the letter-sound correspondences.	2
Reviewer Comments	
Reviewers noted that in Grades 1 and 2, during the Reading and Vocabulary portion of instruction, students are provided with a list of Power Words and are prompted to read them or read along with the teacher in the text. However, students do not always have the prerequisite code knowledge needed to read and write these words, which may require them to rely on memorization or guessing rather than decoding strategies. For example, in Grade 1, Module 4, students are asked to read and write words like "team," "equipment," "coach," and "goal," while in Grade 2, Module 7, Week 1, students are prompted to read and write words including "approached," "potential," "series," "motioned," and "communicate." As a result, students may	

have limited opportunities to apply recently taught phonics patterns and may instead rely on memorization or guessing when encountering these words during this portion of instruction.
HMH's Response
HMH Into Reading emphasizes using letter-sound relationships to decode words, with opportunities to apply these skills in decodable text. Irregular words are taught using the Heart Word approach, in which students analyze the parts of the word that align to known phonics patterns and identify any irregular elements. This routine ensures that students continue to attend to letter-sound relationships rather than relying on whole-word memorization. Additionally, *HMH Into Reading* includes a clearly defined scope and sequence that systematically builds phonics knowledge from simple to complex so that students develop the necessary decoding skills before being expected to apply them independently. The Reading and Vocabulary portion of *HMH Into Reading* is intentionally designed to support meaning making, background knowledge, and academic language development, rather than to serve as the primary context for phonics instruction. During this portion of the lesson, students engage with rich texts and key vocabulary to build conceptual understanding and oral language related to the module topic. Words highlighted for discussion are introduced to deepen comprehension and language use within authentic reading experiences, not to be memorized by sight. This instruction occurs alongside, and after, dedicated foundational skills lessons, where phonological awareness, phonics, and encoding are taught explicitly and systematically. When students encounter complex or unfamiliar words during Reading and Vocabulary instruction, they are not expected to guess or rely on whole-word memorization. Instead, instruction supports access to text and language so that students can participate meaningfully in discussion and knowledge building. More complex words (such as those cited in the report - *team, equipment, approached, communicate*) are introduced through teacher modeling, read-aloud, and supported discussion within connected text. Routines provide contextual and oral language support, ensuring that students are not prompted to guess or treat these words as isolated sight words.

1.C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

The Reading League Criteria and Score	
1.23: Instruction encourages students to memorize whole words, read using the first letter only as a clue, guess at words in context using a "What would make sense?" strategy, or use picture clues rather than phonic decoding.	2
Reviewer Comments	
Reviewers observed that some of Into Reading's materials include words that students may not yet be able to decode. Students are provided with decodable texts aligned to target phonics skills; however, these are separate from the primary reading materials used during	

core instruction. While foundational lessons include resources such as Blend-It Books to support phonics development, the main text (*myBook*) is not consistently decodable.

For example, in Grade 1, Module 7, Week 1, Lesson 3 (*Sam and Dave Dig a Hole*), students are introduced to Power Words prior to reading. However, many of the words in the text include phonics patterns that have not yet been explicitly taught, making the text inaccessible for independent decoding (see Teaching Pal, p. 8). Although the Teacher Guide frames this as a read-aloud ("Read for Understanding"), it also includes language such as "guide children to read the story all the way through," suggesting that students are expected to engage in reading the text themselves. This creates a potential mismatch between students' current decoding knowledge and the demands of the text.

While decodable passages are included elsewhere in the program, they are part of a separate instructional component. As a result, students may be asked to read connected text during core instruction that is not aligned to the phonics skills they have been taught, which could impact their ability to apply decoding skills and develop reading accuracy.

HMH's Response

HMH Into Reading foundational skills and decodable text are a core part of instruction every day. The instructional model includes explicit instruction in foundational skills, reading, vocabulary, writing, and grammar daily.

Foundational skill instruction is structured spirally so that phonics patterns and decoding routines are explicitly taught, practiced, and revisited across the year, reinforcing accurate word reading rather than cue-based guessing strategies. The program includes systematic teaching of these skills and follows a logical scope and sequence, progressing from simple to more complex sound–spelling patterns, ensuring students learn how to map sounds to letters and blend them to read words. Additionally, when students encounter unfamiliar words, instructional routines direct teachers to prompt students to attend to all letters in the word, apply known sound–symbol correspondences, and blend phonemes, rather than relying on first letter cues, pictures, or context. *HMH Into Reading* provides a consistent focus on accurate word reading aligned with research from the National Reading Panel report and the International Dyslexia Association.

In the whole class shared reading portion of the lesson, students engage with meaning-rich, authentic grade level text during the "Read for Understanding". This is not an independent decoding task. Students are not expected to independently decode all words in the text within this specific instructional context. The Teacher's Guide includes language such as "guide children to read," within a scaffolded instructional context where the teacher models fluent reading and supports comprehension. The students are supported by the teacher rather than being prompted to guess or rely on contextual or visual cues. In English, there are many orthographic regularities that readers eventually use, so some must be acquired implicitly through repeated exposure to print.

Research shows that students benefit from exposure to complex text through read-alouds and shared reading before they can independently decode all words, as this builds vocabulary, knowledge, and comprehension. *Into Reading* treats decoding and meaning-making as parallel strands, using different text types for different instructional purposes.

3: Reading Comprehension

The Reading League Criteria and Score	
3.1: Comprehension strategies such as identifying the main idea, summarizing, noting text structure, inferencing, and fix-ups are not taught and practiced throughout the year using a gradual release of responsibility (i.e., I do, we do, you do) using appropriate instructional text that students can accurately decode.	2
Reviewer Comments	
Into Reading teaches comprehension strategies and vocabulary skills in support of the module topic and texts by following a consistent lesson progression. This includes systematic vocabulary building and the development of academic language that follows an "I do, we do, you do" progression. While the program introduces comprehension strategies at each grade level, it does not revisit them often enough. For example, the skills trace document for Module 1, Grade 1, reflects a minimally distributed instructional sequence. Most reading comprehension skills are introduced in a single week, with limited follow-up opportunities for review or reinforcement. For example, skills such as using Story Structure and Author's Purpose to aid in comprehension are introduced and then revisited once; others, like Make Inferences, Monitor and Clarify, and Topic and Central Idea, are taught but show little to no evidence of subsequent reinforcement across the remaining weeks. The skills trace document for Module 1, Grade 5, reflects a similar pattern to the Grade 1 example, with comprehension skills introduced across the module but receiving limited and inconsistent opportunities for review and reinforcement. While there is slightly more distribution of skills across weeks and some instances of immediate reinforcement (e.g., Text Structure is both taught and reviewed in Week 2 of the instructional sequence), most skills remain isolated within a single week of instruction. As a result, the sequence provides limited opportunities for cumulative practice, which may impact students' ability to internalize and transfer comprehension strategies over time.	
HMH's Response	
Strategies are introduced explicitly, modeled by the teacher, practiced collaboratively, and then applied repeatedly across multiple texts, genres, topics, and tasks. The spiral design ensures that comprehension strategies are revisited multiple times in new context across the year and grades. While strategies may be introduced in specific weeks, students continue to apply them through reading, discussion, and writing tasks all year long. The skills trace referenced in the review is looking at what appears in a 3-week module and not across the full year of the program.	

5: Assessment

The Reading League Criteria and Score	
5.13: Multilingual learners are not assessed in their home language.	3

Reviewer Comments

Reviewer Comments: Assessments within Into Reading's assessment suite are primarily designed to measure reading and language comprehension in English. The program does include a Supporting Multilingual Learners by Language Proficiency Level document, which outlines ways to assess students' understanding at the Entering, Emerging/Developing, and Expanding/Bridging levels of English proficiency. However, the curriculum does not include resources to assess multilingual learners in their home language. As such, program adopters would also need to look to outside assessment tools to ensure that multilingual learners are assessed in their home language. However, the team noted that this would most likely be the case with most core curricula programs.

HMH's Response

HMH understands the role of home language in literacy development, and the importance of screening and early intervention for Multilingual learners and provides a number of multilingual resources. While core assessments remain in English to measure progress toward grade-level English Language Arts standards in *HMH Into Reading*, AI tools enable teachers to provide equitable access and gather evidence of student understanding.

Located on Ed within the *Into Reading* digital program, HMH AI Tools offers a variety of features to support teachers, including a text translation tool. All *Into Reading* program content is ingested to make it easy for teachers to leverage these tools with the curriculum, including assessments.

Before assessments, AI-powered translation tools can translate directions, task expectations, and key vocabulary into students' home languages, so learners clearly understand what is being asked, reducing construct-irrelevant language barriers. After instruction or assessment, teachers can use AI to generate optional, informal checks to confirm whether difficulties stem from language acquisition or content understanding.

AI tools can also support more accurate interpretation of assessment results by translating student responses, summarizing patterns, and suggesting targeted instructional aligned to language proficiency levels. Translations can help teachers communicate results and instructional recommendations clearly with families in their home languages.

Final Report Summary- Challenges

Challenge #1
Because Into Reading is all-encompassing, at times it prioritizes breadth over depth, with a rapid, additive approach to skill coverage that limits opportunities for deep, transformative learning and mastery.
HMH's Response
HMH Into Reading is purposefully designed to balance breadth with depth by pairing comprehensive skill coverage with a coherent instructional model that prioritizes mastery over time, rather than one-time exposure. While the program introduces a wide range of standards-aligned skills, these are not taught in isolation or through rapid, additive coverage. Priority skills are instead explicitly taught and revisited through a structured, spiraling approach in which students encounter and apply the same skills across lessons, weeks, and modules with increasing complexity. This design ensures that learning builds cumulatively, allowing students multiple opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and demonstrate understanding in new contexts. Students engage in cumulative reading, writing, and discussion tasks grounded in authentic texts, enabling them to deepen understanding and transfer skills over time while building knowledge across topics. Module and weekly structures further support this progression by organizing skills around meaningful texts and essential questions, helping teachers maintain clear instructional focus. To support prioritization and implementation, teachers are provided embedded guidance on instructional focus, including modeled routines, probing questions, and point-of-use supports, along with differentiation resources and flexible pathways for reteaching or extending learning. These supports enable teachers to maintain full standards coverage while ensuring that instruction emphasizes depth, coherence, and mastery for all learners.

Challenge #2
The volume of Into Reading's content and components may make it difficult for educators to prioritize instructional targets, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation across classrooms.
HMH's Response
HMH Into Reading supports consistent instructional focus by making learning goals explicit and actionable. Each module clearly identifies priority skills and outcomes at the outset, which are reinforced through daily lesson objectives and embedded assessment checkpoints. The Implementation Guides further support prioritization by distinguishing essential instructional components from those that are flexible, helping teachers make informed

decisions about time and emphasis. These resources promote coherent planning and more consistent implementation across classrooms, while still allowing responsiveness to student data and local needs.

In addition, Teacher's Corner on the Ed platform provides ongoing professional guidance, reinforcing best practices for implementation, and helping educators sustain clear instructional priorities over time.

Challenge #3
The pacing of Into Reading may require a rapid instructional delivery that is not always realistic within typical classroom time constraints, and the complexity of its materials and structure may necessitate significant professional development for educators to effectively implement the program.
HMH's Response
HMH Into Reading is designed to support realistic instructional delivery through flexible lesson structures and embedded professional learning. Lessons clearly distinguish core instruction from optional extensions, enabling teachers to prioritize essential content and adjust pacing based on available time and student needs. Pacing guidance in the Implementation Guide (pg. 5) outlines essential components and sample pathways, while planning tools such as Editable Weekly Plans and the Classcraft session organizer help teachers anticipate upcoming lessons and allocate time effectively. The instructional model is designed for 90–150 minute literacy blocks, with explicit guidance for adapting the 180-day scope to fit local schedules. To address implementation complexity, *HMH Into Reading* includes embedded professional learning such as Getting Started modules, lesson walkthrough videos, and on-demand PD, along with coaching support through HMH Coachly. Together, these resources reduce the need for extensive external training and help teachers build confidence in pacing and implementation.

Challenge #4
While Into Reading includes decodable passages as part of its foundational skills instruction, there is ambiguity within the "read aloud" portions of lessons. At times, students appear to be asked to read connected text during core instruction that is not aligned to the phonics skills they have been explicitly taught. This lack of clarity may limit students' ability to apply their decoding knowledge, impact reading accuracy, and lead to frustration or reliance on less efficient strategies, such as guessing.
HMH's Response

HMH Into Reading separates decodable text for student reading from more complex text used in teacher-led read-alouds and shared reading. Students are not expected to independently decode these more complex texts.

During foundational skills instruction, students read only decodable texts that align to previously taught phonics patterns, ensuring accurate application of skills and reducing reliance on guessing. In contrast, *my*Book selections are designed to expose students to rich, grade-level language and content, supporting vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and knowledge building.

This clear instructional distinction protects the integrity of decoding practice while allowing students to engage with complex text, ensuring that skill application remains aligned to instruction and developmentally appropriate.