

# Listening Guide for *A Novel Idea*

## Episode 8: “The Science of Reading: Where Do We Go From Here?”

*This listening guide is for caregivers interested in learning more about literacy instruction and educators who want to facilitate discussion within their higher education classroom or professional development setting. In this episode, we explore what the future of the science of reading may look like. Visit [our website](#) for the transcript and sources for this episode.*

## Before You Listen

### What You’ve Heard So Far

Previously on *A Novel Idea*, Host Meg Mechelke discussed the National Reading Panel, the Reading First program, and the rise of balanced literacy.

### Pre-Listening Discussion Questions

*Before you listen, consider the following questions. This can be a self-guided or discussion-based activity. Activating your background knowledge and considering your thoughts about these topics can help you connect the episode to your own experiences.*

1. *For educators:* Have you ever implemented a curriculum change in your school or classroom? Reflect on your experience. What did you find challenging or helpful?
2. *For caregivers:* Reflect on how your child reacts to change either in the classroom or at home. What support do you think would be helpful for students and families during a curriculum change?

## Press Play

### Break It Down

*Here, you can find the key points from the episode, organized with thematic headings and time stamps. Key terms related to literacy instruction are italicized and defined.*

#### **Resistance to Change**

(00:00 - 2:36)

Drawing from Dr. Jeanne Chall's 1967 book, *The Great Debate*, Host Meg Mechelke identifies a leading reason behind schools' decisions to stick with instructional methods not supported by the science of reading.

#### **Embracing Curiosity**

(2:36 - 8:18)

In conversation with Reading Researcher Reid Lyon, Literacy Podcast Co-Hosts Melissa Loftus and Lori Sappington, and Education Activist Kareem Weaver, Mechelke emphasizes that the science of reading does not identify one "correct" curriculum but rather refers to a developing body of literacy research requiring educators to be curious and open to adjusting their methods.

#### **Educators Need the "Why" and the "How"**

(8:18 - 10:42)

In conversation with Lyon and Literacy Podcaster Emily Hanford, Mechelke explains that the value of the science of reading movement is to shed light on why curriculum needs to change and what tools educators can use to implement change successfully.

#### **Transitioning to Evidence-Based Teaching**

(10:42 - 17:17)

Mechelke shares the experiences of Elementary Teacher Hannah Bain, who discovered the science of reading while trying to figure out why some students struggled more than others with their school's literacy curriculum. By accessing research and resources online, Bain was able to effectively implement evidence-based instruction methods in her classroom.

## What's Really Aligned with SOR?

(17:17 - 22:43)

In conversation with Sappington and Hanford, Mechelke emphasizes the need to carefully assess your sources and consider that some content creators may have different ideas of the science of reading. IRRC Assistant Director for Education and Outreach Nina Lorimor-Easley shares key components that all evidence-based curriculums should include, such as a *scope and sequence* as well as practice in all four language areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

*A scope and sequence* is a roadmap for instruction that tells you two things: what to teach (scope) and when to teach it (sequence). A scope and sequence should be cumulative and systematic, meaning that students begin with simple concepts before advancing to more complex ones.

## Understanding Research

(22:43 - 30:32)

Lorimor-Easley gives advice on understanding research results and methodologies, including the factors that are most important to consider when deciding if a study is valid.

## How to Implement Curriculum

(30:32 - 33:08)

In conversation with Hanford and Lorimor-Easley, Mechelke discusses the challenges that accompany implementing a new curriculum and the need for educators to adhere to the curriculum's outline.

## Looking Forward

(33:08 - 39:40)

In conversation with Hanford, Mechelke explains that while the science of reading holds great promise for reforming literacy education, it's important not to think of it as a catch-all solution; literacy research and discussion must continue to avoid

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becoming set in one way. Closing remarks from past interviewees demonstrate a shared optimism about the positive impact the science of reading will continue to have on young readers.

## After You Listen

### Post-Listening Discussion Questions

*Continue the conversation with the following questions. This can be a self-guided or discussion-based activity. Considering these post-listening questions can deepen your comprehension of the episode's key ideas and allow you to connect the episode's topics to your own experiences.*

1. In this episode, Elementary Teacher Hannah Bain describes her self-guided process of learning about the science of reading and implementing change in her classroom. What materials or resources would you use to access research findings? What materials or resources would you recommend to others?

### Go Beyond the Episode

*Want to learn more? The following list contains resources and studies that were mentioned in the episode as well as further reading materials on key topics from the episode. For a full list of sources, visit [our website](#).*

**[Science or Snake Oil: How to Tell the Difference](#)**: In this webinar by Holly Lane of the University of Florida Literacy Institute, learn how to determine who and what to believe when it comes to the science of reading.

**["Read It, Say It, Hear It, Write It: Instructional Routines That Engage the Four Language Skill Areas"](#)**: In this blog post by Meg Mechelke, learn about the four primary language skill areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

**["Scope and Sequence: What Is It, and How Do Educators Use It to Guide Instruction?"](#)**: In this blog post by Meg Mechelke, learn how a scope and sequence can help educators ensure that their evidence-based curriculum is thorough and systematic.