



LXDRESEARCH
AT CHARLES RIVER MEDIA

Tumbleweed Publishing

Research Foundation & Logic Model



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DEMONSTRATES A RATIONALE

LXD Research Recognition for
Tumbleweed Publishing



tumbleweed

This product has been rigorously evaluated and is hereby acknowledged for meeting the educational impact criteria of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), warranting a **Level 4** for "Demonstrating a Rationale." This recognition is based on its proven effectiveness in enhancing grade-level learning outcomes.

REVIEWED BY THE LXD RESEARCH EXPERT REVIEW PANEL

Rachel Schechter, Ph.D.
Founder of LXD Research

September 24, 2025

DATE

Educators search for high-quality research and evidence-based interventions to strengthen grant applications, to support comprehensive and targeted schools, or to implement new programming in their schools. Evidence requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are designed to ensure that states, districts, and schools can identify programs, practices, products, and policies that work across various populations.

Educational programs document their evidence of design, effectiveness, and impact in order to be eligible for federal funding. While there is no singular authority that determines a program's tier, the Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology provides standards to assess the varying levels of strength of research for education products.

The categories for ESSA Evidence are: strong (Tier 1), moderate (Tier 2), and promising (Tier 3) evidence of effectiveness, or demonstrates a rationale to be effective (Tier 4).

This product meets the requirements for Tier 4:

- ✓ Documentation of how the product's design relates to intended outcomes, with corresponding academic, published research
- ✓ Describes the product's features and outcomes in a logic model
- ✓ A study is planned and/or currently underway
- ★ A third-party research organization has reviewed the documentation for ESSA validation

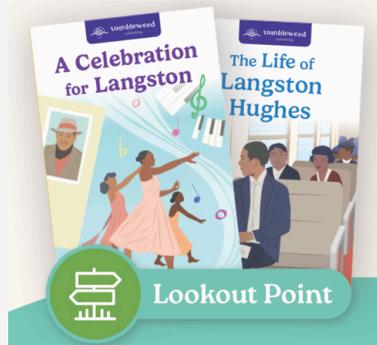


When product designers leverage learning sciences to design their programs, educators can better target instruction, and students' skills soar. Through interviews with the product designers, an evaluation of their research-informed activities, and a planning of an efficacy study, this product meets the criteria for LXD Research's ESSA Tier 4 Evidence.

– Rachel Schechter, Ph.D., Founder of LXD Research

What is Tumbleweed Publishing?

Tumbleweed Publishing creates structured literacy tools for grades 2-6, designed to support neurodiverse learners, striving readers, and their educators. The innovative, distraction-free decodable books provide an enjoyable experience through rich illustrations and eye catching photography, while celebrating individual strengths to foster confidence in all readers. Aligned with the Science of Reading, Tumbleweed's decodable book collection includes three sets of readers, each targeting different levels of dyslexia and striving readers. Base Camp, focuses on foundational phonics skills making it a valuable tool for new readers just starting to decode sounds and simple words. Lookout Point, supports developing readers as they apply their growing phonics knowledge to longer stories. Summit, the most advanced of the three series introduces more challenging vocabulary and story elements, for readers who have a strong grasp on phonics



Empowering Students. Supporting Teachers.

Tumbleweed's materials are designed to be dyslexia-friendly, ADHD-friendly, and suitable for multilingual learners, revolutionizing how students read, feel, and achieve success. Each reader is 95% decodable and has minimal visual distractions as the text is separated from visuals, allowing students to focus on decoding and comprehension. At the back of each reader, there is a read-aloud, providing rich language exposure, as well as structured literacy activities that address all five pillars of Structured Literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Each reader also includes extra practice activities such as reading practice for the target sound, spelling relationships, and high frequency words. Audio recordings of the text can be used as independent re-readings in school. They can also be used at home, incorporating the family into the learning.

Tumbleweed offers teachers professional development and educator support. The Teacher Guides support systematic and explicit instruction and address all five pillars of Structured Literacy.

Tumbleweed Foundational Research Summary

Product Background & Overview

Tumbleweed Publishing creates materials for neurodiverse learners and striving readers that are distraction-free, inclusive, and celebrate their strengths. Designed for students in Grades 2--6, Tumbleweed decodables are comprehensive, Science of Reading-aligned, and pair engaging fiction and nonfiction texts with systematic, explicit instruction. With features that support individuals with dyslexia, ADHD, and executive functioning challenges, as well as professional development opportunities for educators, Tumbleweed ensures that all learners are supported.

What sets Tumbleweed apart is its intentional, evidence-based design. By integrating accessible, age-appropriate content with high-frequency word support, decodability, and thoughtfully paired texts for every skill, Tumbleweed promotes decoding, expressive language, comprehension, and student engagement, all while reducing cognitive load and encouraging meaningful reading experiences.

Product Research Basis

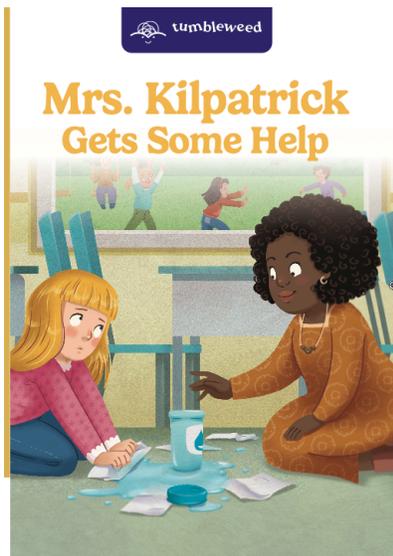
Tumbleweed is created specifically for neurodiverse learners (and striving readers).

Research consistently demonstrates that students with dyslexia benefit from **systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics** (National Reading Panel, 2000; Moats, 2020). Structured literacy approaches, which emphasize direct and multisensory instruction, are particularly effective in meeting the needs of dyslexic learners (Odegard, n.d.). Students with dyslexia process reading differently, making it especially critical that instructional materials follow a clear and explicit design (Martin et al., 2015). Students with dyslexia have reading difficulties that are further magnified in orthographically complex languages such as English, where consistent and structured phonics instruction is most beneficial (Carioti et al., 2021). Sustained, evidence-based interventions have produced the most significant literacy gains for students with or at risk for dyslexia (Hall et al., 2022).

Central to implementing this research-based instruction effectively is the **strategic use of decodable books**, which play a critical role by aligning directly with students' phonics knowledge and allowing for meaningful practice of newly taught skills (The Reading League, 2023; Kilpatrick, 2021). This alignment prevents reliance on ineffective guessing strategies such as using pictures or context clues—habits that can undermine accurate word recognition and long-term reading success. Making explicit, systematic opportunities to connect sounds and symbols is essential for strengthening neural pathways that support skilled reading (Martin et al., 2015). By bridging explicit skill instruction with authentic reading experiences, decodable books provide dyslexic learners with the structured practice necessary to build automaticity, confidence, and long-term reading success.

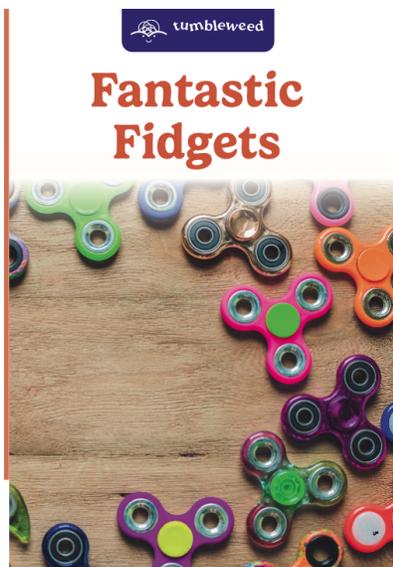
While decodable books provide the technical foundation for reading success, the **content and representation** within these texts are equally crucial for sustained engagement and learning. Students develop stronger identities as readers and engage more deeply when they encounter texts that serve as mirrors, reflecting their own lives, and windows, offering perspectives into others' experiences (Bishop, 1990; Meyer, 2020). Scholarship on multicultural literature demonstrates that inclusive stories foster self-esteem, reduce feelings of isolation, and cultivate empathy and respect among young readers (Steiner et al., 2008). When students see themselves authentically represented in texts, they develop stronger reading identities and greater confidence in their abilities, particularly important given that readers who struggle often report lower self-concept in reading-related domains (McArthur et al., 2020). This body of research affirms that texts functioning as mirrors and windows are essential for reinforcing readers' self-worth, supporting identity development, and sustaining long-term engagement in reading.

Tumbleweed books directly translate this research into practice by **centering the experiences of neurodiverse learners** through carefully crafted content and design. The books feature diverse learning experiences with stories that serve as mirrors for students who may see themselves differently. For example, a narrative about fidgeting in *Mrs. Kilpatrick Gets Some Help*, paired with the non-fiction text *Fantastic Fidgets*, normalizes and celebrates neurodivergent behaviors rather than pathologizing them. This approach directly supports the research finding that representation fosters self-esteem and reduces feelings of isolation (Steiner et al., 2008).



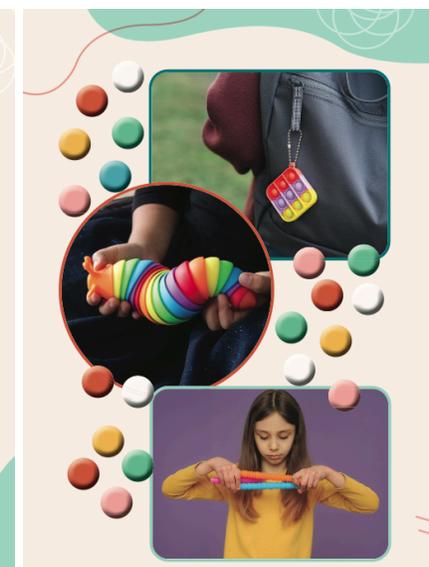
Mrs. Kilpatrick nods at Linden and **says**, “That is for you, Linden. When your mind drifts, you can sketch anything you want as you listen to my words. I just ask that you look up at me sometimes.”

Mrs. Kilpatrick **may not** be like the others, Linden thinks. And the pad does help! Linden has consistent eye contact with Mrs. Kilpatrick as she sketches in it.



Does this happen to you a lot? It happens to a lot of **people** — not just kids! Many **people** cannot sit still when they try to focus on a task. Why is this?

Fidgeting is the **way** your mind and body work together to help you focus. When your mind drifts to other things, it tells your body to move so you can stick to your task. **Fidgeting** is also a **way** to expend energy when you feel stress.

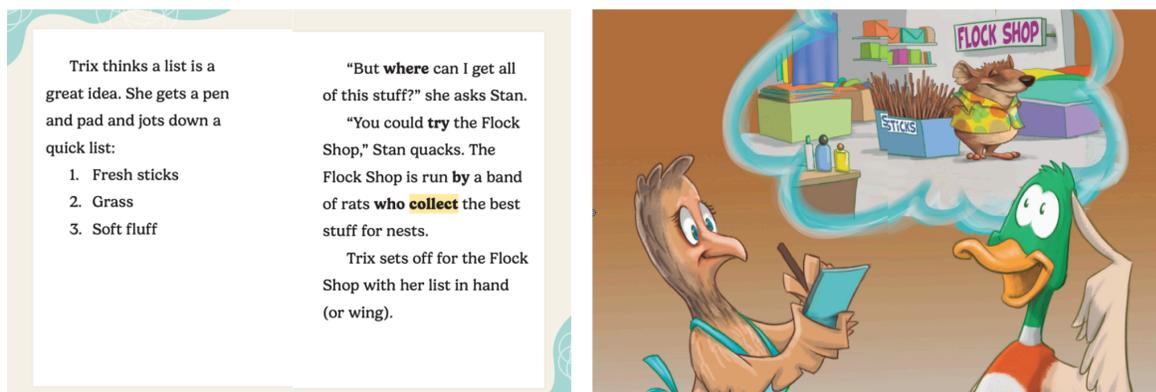


Beyond content representation, Tumbleweed decodable books address the neurological realities of how students with dyslexia process information through intentional design features that reduce cognitive load, implementing the clear, explicit design that research identifies as critical for these learners (Martin et al., 2015). These research-based design elements include bolded high-frequency words that provide visual scaffolding, extra spaces between words that support visual processing challenges common in dyslexia, and 95% decodability that ensures alignment with students' phonics knowledge (The Reading League, 2023; Kilpatrick, 2021).

The books also address executive functioning challenges that often accompany neurodiversity through engaging storylines, such as "Nest Quest," which **weave organizational thinking and planning support directly into the narrative**, connecting these cognitive skills to student engagement rather than treating them as separate interventions. By combining authentic representations of neurodiverse experiences with research-based design principles and embedded executive functioning support, Tumbleweed decodable books provide learners with reading experiences that build technical skills, foster a positive reading identity, and develop real-world cognitive strategies simultaneously.

Tumbleweed separates images from text, allowing readers to derive meaning from the words themselves.

Cognitive Load Theory suggests that learning is most effective when instructional materials minimize unnecessary demands on working memory, allowing students to focus their cognitive resources on essential processes such as decoding (Sweller et al., 2011). This principle supports reading approaches that emphasize explicit, systematic phonics instruction rather than reliance on pictures or context clues, as the latter can distract from accurate word recognition (National Reading Panel, 2000). Research on learning media reinforces this idea: instructional materials should avoid extraneous visual information so learners can concentrate on the text itself (Mayer & Fiorella, 2014). When visuals are used, separating them from the printed text and including only those directly relevant to the learning goal helps ensure students can devote full attention to decoding and comprehension (Mayer & Fiorella, 2014)



Next page 

The cognitive benefits of **reducing reliance on visual cues** become even more critical when considering the long-term consequences of encouraging guessing strategies. When students rely on guessing from pictures or context rather than decoding, they miss opportunities to build the precise sound–symbol knowledge required for fluent reading (National Reading Panel, 2000). This habit is especially harmful for students with dyslexia, who need explicit and systematic practice connecting letters to sounds, as research underscores that decoding, not context guessing, is the foundation of skilled reading (Castles et al., 2018). Phonemic awareness and accurate decoding, rather than compensatory strategies, are what enable students to develop the automatic word recognition that supports comprehension (Kilpatrick, 2021). Over time, over-reliance on picture cues reinforces ineffective habits, diverting attention away from the text and undermining long-term reading success (Ehri, 2020).

Rather than eliminating visual elements, effective design can strategically position illustrations as rewards that enhance motivation while preserving the integrity of the decoding process. Gamification research demonstrates that learning is enhanced when rewards are directly tied to performance, by transforming effort into a source of intrinsic motivation (Ertan & Kocadere, 2022; Wang & Tahir, 2020). Engaged reading emerges when instructional experiences provide purpose, challenge, and opportunities for meaningful success, fostering motivation and persistence in learners (Guthrie et al., 2013). In literacy instruction, delaying illustrations until after successful decoding leverages these principles by providing anticipation and contingent rewards that reinforce effort, sustain attention, and make reading practice intrinsically motivating (Sailer et al., 2017). This approach **transforms what could be a distraction during reading into a celebration of successful decoding**, maintaining both cognitive focus and student engagement.

These design strategies prove particularly beneficial for learners who face additional cognitive or linguistic challenges in reading acquisition. Reducing extraneous visual information and structuring instructional materials systematically can enhance learning for students with dyslexia, ADHD, and multilingual learners who require more focused cognitive support. Students with attention challenges benefit from minimized visual distractions, which allows them to maintain focus and devote cognitive resources to decoding and comprehension (Odegard, n.d.; Wolff et al., 2024; Luft & Brochu, 2023). Similarly, multilingual learners can focus on English phonics patterns without conflicting visual cues, supporting phonemic awareness and word recognition through explicit, systematic instruction (Odegard, n.d.; O'Brien, 2021). By prioritizing essential content and

minimizing cognitive interference, these design strategies create inclusive learning environments that foster sustained attention, effective skill development, and equitable access to literacy for diverse learners.

Tumbleweed decodables directly implement these principles through their innovative page design, where pictures follow the text on different pages rather than appearing alongside it. This separation ensures that striving readers cannot guess what the text says by relying on visual context cues. This keeps students focused on the essential work of decoding while reducing cognitive load that would otherwise be created by competing visual elements. Simultaneously, this design maintains student motivation by transforming illustrations into rewards that students receive after successfully reading each page of text, creating what one student describes as a "surprise after each page." This approach perfectly embodies the research on gamification and contingent rewards, turning the reading process into an engaging cycle where effort is immediately followed by visual celebration, building both decoding skills and positive associations with reading practice.

Tumbleweed provides support for both expressive language development and reading comprehension.

Reading becomes exponentially more powerful when it shifts from a quiet, individual activity to an interactive conversation that builds language and thinking skills simultaneously, a key principle demonstrated in studies of dialogic reading (Pillinger & Vardy, 2022; Wang et al., 2019). Dialogic reading leverages discussion around text and illustrations to actively engage students in the meaning-making process, transforming how children experience and learn from books (Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2021). **By prompting students to describe, predict, and question during read-alouds, this approach fosters vocabulary growth, strengthens listening and oral language skills, and deepens comprehension,** as evidenced by



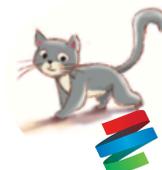
Why do cats seem to hate water and avoid it at all costs? To answer this question, **experts** point to where the domestic cat originated, or came from.

The earliest **tame** cats can be traced back to more than 10,000 years ago in the Middle East in a region called the Fertile Crescent. The Fertile Crescent is where people first began farming. It was a hot, dry place.

As people started farming, they began storing extra crops such as grain in storage sheds and bins. Mice and other rodents became pests as they raided these storage places. Naturally, wild cats followed the rodents into settlements. The rodents were an easy source of food for cats. And the people were happy to have the cats because they provided a service: pest control!

Gradually, people became comfortable with cats living close to them. Then, cats began living inside people's homes. As cats became **tamed**, people started doting on them as pets. In ancient Egypt, the cat was even worshiped as a god. Later, people took cats on ships to other places in Europe and around the world.

So, because the earliest cats lived in hot, dry places, their bodies weren't used to being in water. Today's domestic cats still prefer staying warm...and dry!



multiple experimental and observational studies (Noble et al., 2019; Pillinger & Vardy, 2022).

Illustrations play a crucial role in this process by providing concrete visual support that sparks conversation and reinforces understanding, eliciting meaningful dialogue between adult readers and students (Heubeck, 2023). Rather than passive listening, dialogic reading creates a dynamic, two-way interaction that allows learners to practice language in context while developing critical thinking and narrative skills. This collaborative approach promotes engagement and motivation as students participate in exchanges that connect the text to their own experiences and prior knowledge (Shanahan et al., 2010; Noble et al., 2019). By integrating discussion into shared reading experiences, educators create learning opportunities that extend beyond basic decoding to encompass higher-order language and cognitive development, benefiting a broad range of learners across diverse linguistic and academic backgrounds.

The foundation for these interactive conversations lies in the fundamental practice of read-alouds themselves, which serve as powerful instructional tools that expose students to vocabulary, syntax, and text structures beyond their independent reading level, providing essential input for language development and comprehension (DeJulio et al., 2022). By hearing sophisticated sentence patterns and academic words in meaningful contexts, students strengthen both listening and reading comprehension, building linguistic resources they can later apply to their own reading (Foorman et al., 2015). **The importance of this oral language foundation cannot be overstated**, as listening comprehension and vocabulary knowledge are strongly predictive of reading outcomes in early grades (Foorman et al., 2015). When educators integrate targeted discussion and questioning during these read-aloud sessions,



Why Cat and Dog Are Enemies



Once upon a time, Dog and Cat lived together with a family. The family was very lucky and always had good food to eat and the finest clothes to wear. Their luck was because of a special golden ring that had been passed down in the husband's family.

One day, the husband sold the ring, not knowing it was so lucky. After that, the family, including Dog and Cat, became very unlucky. They had little food to eat, and they had to sell all their finest clothes.

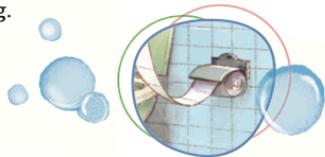
Dog and Cat knew the ring was lucky, so they made a plan together to get it back. "You catch a mouse," Dog said to Cat. "The mouse will sneak into the new owner's **business** and gnaw a hole into the chest where the ring is kept."

So Cat caught a mouse and Mouse agreed to help Dog and Cat. They had a **difficult** time getting to the new owner's **business**, though. The three animals had to cross a river, so Dog carried Cat and Mouse across the river on his back. After Mouse got the ring, Dog carried them across the river again. After all the swimming, Dog was so tired! Cat quickly outran him and beat him home with the ring.

they encourage students to actively engage with texts, deepening comprehension and reinforcing language growth in ways that support both immediate understanding and long-term reading success (DeJulio et al., 2022).

Tumbleweed decodable books strategically implement these interactive reading practices through their thoughtful structural design and supplementary materials. The books feature richly detailed illustrations specifically crafted to elicit discussion, supporting language skills and comprehension development through meaningful visual engagement that sparks the kind of descriptive and predictive conversations that research shows are so beneficial. The deliberate separation of text and images creates natural stopping points that facilitate the interactive dialogue essential to both dialogic reading and effective read-alouds, allowing educators and students to engage deeply with each page before moving forward.

Comprehensive comprehension questions accompany these materials. The questions provide structured discussion opportunities. They support expressive language development while reinforcing active engagement. This approach emphasizes meaning-making rather than passive reading. It transforms reading from simple consumption into dynamic learning experiences.

<p>Reflect on Your Reading </p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why do Chad's cats need a bath?2. Chad says he is fed up. What does "fed up" mean?3. Look at pages 12–13. How does the art make you feel?4. Connect to Self Would you try to wash a cat like Tish and Chad did? Why or why not? <p>Phonics Look at the words with endings -s and -es on page 26. Use your finger to draw a line under each base word and circle the ending.</p> 	<p>Tumble Words </p> <p>Draw an expert who works with animals that are tame.</p> <p>Fluency Reread pages 18–19. Be sure to use expression to show how Chad and Tish feel.</p> <p>Writing How would the story change if Chad and Tish had to wash a different animal? Write about it.</p> <p>Speaking & Listening Read pages 2–3. Record yourself reading it. Then play your recording. Think about how you could illustrate these pages.</p>
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The Positive Effects of Tossing Pufflings

Read Aloud

Although Blake is a character in a story, the puffins that descend on Iceland and its surrounding **islands** are very real. In early spring, thousands of puffins come ashore to fix up their nests and lay eggs. In fact, many puffins return to the same nests year after year.



The Westman **Islands** are a chain of about 15 **islands** off the coast of Iceland. Heimaey **Island** is the largest of them.

Reflect on Your Reading

Read Together

1. How does Blake feel about puffins and why?
2. This story is told from Blake's point of view. How does this shape your opinion of puffins?
3. Why is it important to help pufflings by tossing them in the water? Use details from the story and the Read Aloud.
4. **Connect to Self** Can you relate to Blake's love of puffins? Is there an animal you love and care about like he does puffins?

Phonics
Find three CVCe syllable exceptions in the text:
one that has one syllable,
one that has two syllables, and one that has three syllables.



Extra Practice

Read these words for extra practice.

Words with VCe Exceptions

positive	expansive	delve
impressive	attractive	competitive
negative	promise	massive
obsessive	protective	live
offense	give	



Tumbleweed offers a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts that encourage student engagement and foster wide reading across genres and topics.

Educational research indicates that integrating reading instruction with **content-rich subjects can have a positive impact on both literacy development and content learning**. For example, when students engage with authentic informational texts within science instruction, they benefit by building essential content knowledge while simultaneously strengthening key literacy skills (Cervetti et al., 2012). This integrated approach supports students in developing a deeper understanding of complex ideas and contributes to improved vocabulary and science writing, both of which are critical for reading development (Cervetti et al., 2012). Moreover, embedding reading instruction within content-rich curricula has been shown to enhance student motivation and engagement, which are closely linked to reading comprehension and academic growth (Guthrie et al., 2004; Wigfield et al., 2004). **Students tend to be more engaged when reading is connected to real-world topics that interest them, and this engagement can drive both comprehension and sustained reading effort** (Guthrie et al., 2004). Together, these findings support the value of integrated literacy instruction in promoting meaningful learning across disciplines and strengthening students' motivation to read.

This integration of reading and content instruction becomes even more critical when considering the specific needs of students with reading difficulties, particularly those with dyslexia. Students with dyslexia face unique challenges that require specialized

instructional approaches grounded in extensive practice and strategic repetition. These learners need substantial exposure to connected text to develop the fluency skills that often come naturally to their peers (Miller, 2014). **A central instructional principle is the concept of “miles on the page”—the idea that fluency and mastery develop through sustained, repeated engagement with meaningful, connected texts rather than isolated skill drills** (Lemov, 2017). For students with dyslexia, accumulating a high volume of reading practice is essential to building word recognition and reading automaticity because they require repeated exposure to text patterns to strengthen both word recognition skills and reading automaticity (Allington, 2013).

This extensive practice becomes even more effective when combined with targeted repeated reading interventions, where students read the same passage multiple times, often after hearing a fluent model, to build familiarity and confidence (Lee & Yoon, 2016). These repeated reading approaches have been shown to significantly improve reading speed, accuracy, and comprehension among struggling readers, creating measurable gains that support long-term literacy development. For students with dyslexia, the combination of substantial reading volume with strategic repetition represents not just an effective instructional strategy, but an essential foundation for accessing academic content and lifelong learning.

Tumbleweed pairs each fictional story with a corresponding nonfiction text on the same topic. This deliberate pairing allows students to explore subjects through both narrative and informational lenses. For example, students can learn about animal care by reading a story about bathing a cat alongside factual content about jobs involving animal care.



Tumbleweed pairs a fictional story about giving a cat a bath with a nonfiction text about jobs that involve working with animals.

This approach ensures that students encounter vocabulary and concepts in multiple contexts, reinforcing comprehension while building the cross-curricular knowledge that research shows is essential for reading development (Cervetti et al., 2012; Guthrie et al., 2004). The paired texts create natural opportunities for students to make **meaningful connections between fictional scenarios and real-world information**, fostering the kind of engaged learning that drives both motivation and academic growth.

Tumbleweed further supports content-rich instruction through the comprehensive structured literacy activities that accompany each reader, addressing all five pillars of reading instruction within meaningful, topic-focused contexts. **Background-building video links integrated into the teacher guide** ensure that educators have the tools necessary to create rich, interconnected learning experiences that research demonstrates are most effective for developing both literacy skills and content knowledge. The systematic progression through Basecamp, Lookout Point, and Summit levels provides a pathway that allows students to engage in cross-curricular reading experiences that cultivate lasting academic growth and reading engagement.

Moreover, **Tumbleweed books are intentionally designed for repeated use**, directly addressing the research on "miles on the page" and the specific needs of students with dyslexia. Each reader includes extensive extra practice activities targeting the specific sound-spelling relationships and high-frequency words introduced in the text, providing the repeated exposure that struggling readers require to build automaticity (Allington, 2013; Lee & Yoon, 2016). The durable construction, engaging content, and systematic practice opportunities support the extensive, targeted practice that research shows is essential for struggling readers. The controlled vocabulary and decodable text structure work together to create optimal learning conditions that build both skill and confidence (Miller, 2014). This comprehensive design philosophy recognizes that effective reading instruction requires sustained engagement through multiple pathways by combining connected text reading with isolated skill practice to develop the automaticity and fluency essential for long-term reading success.

Conclusion

In sum, what sets Tumbleweed decodables apart is their intentional, evidence-based design that supports neurodiverse and striving readers through every aspect of instruction. Rooted in the Science of Reading and supported by extensive research on effective literacy instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000; Moats, 2020; The Reading

League, 2023), Tumbleweed combines high-interest, decodable fiction and nonfiction texts with explicit, systematic teaching aligned to every skill. Features like dyslexia- and ADHD-friendly formatting, executive functioning supports, and thoughtfully sequenced content work together to reduce cognitive load while enhancing comprehension, expressive language, and student engagement. With built-in professional development for educators aligned with explicit instruction principles (Explicit Instruction, n.d.), Tumbleweed empowers effective instruction for all learners. Ultimately, Tumbleweed Publishing creates materials that are distraction-free, inclusive, and celebrate the strengths of neurodiverse students and striving readers.

Acknowledgements

The authors of this study would like to express their sincere thanks to Hannah Jaris for supporting this report.

What Are Educators and Students Saying About Tumbleweed?



In my 25 years as a dyslexia therapist, I've seen countless students struggle with traditional decodable readers that feel clinical or artificial. Tumbleweed Publishing has finally solved this problem. Their readers connect seamlessly to students' background knowledge while **reinforcing level-specific phonics skills using an authentic story**. What moves me most is watching my students' faces light up when they realize they're reading 'real books' – not just therapy tools. For many, it's **their first experience of the joy of reading**, transforming their self-perception from 'struggling reader' to simply 'reader.' That confidence is immeasurable and life-changing.

Certified Academic Language Therapist

The read-alouds are such knowledge building pieces and I am seeing students with memory issues, transferring and remembering the knowledge!

Elementary School Teacher

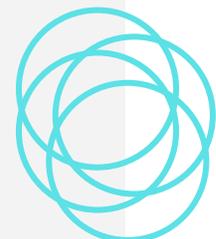


The readers are building confidence and a joy of reading in students who have been disengaged.

Reading Specialist

As a second grade teacher, I am always searching for resources that not only **meet the diverse needs of my students but also engage them meaningfully**—and Tumbleweed has delivered on both fronts. Their book collection is **specifically designed with neurodiverse learners in mind**, offering various levels that cater to the wide range of abilities in my classroom. One of the most unique and effective aspects of the Tumbleweed books is their approach to reading before revealing visuals. This design encouraged my students to **deeply engage with the text, sparking curiosity** and anticipation about what the illustrations might reveal. One of my students described it best, saying the books were “like a surprise on every page.” That excitement made a noticeable difference in how eagerly they approached reading time.

2nd Grade Teacher





Tumbleweed Publishing Logic Model

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many traditional decodables overlook the needs of neurodiverse learners and striving readers, often leading to frustration, disengagement, and limited progress. Tumbleweed Publishing addressed this by creating distraction-free, inclusive decodable materials, specifically designed for students in Grades 2–6, that celebrate student strengths and reduce cognitive load. Their Science of Reading–aligned texts pair engaging, age-appropriate fiction and nonfiction with explicit, systematic instruction, supporting students with dyslexia, ADHD, and executive functioning challenges. With evidence-based design, professional development for educators, and intentional support for decoding, comprehension, and engagement, Tumbleweed empowers all learners to thrive.

RESOURCES

Book Sets by Level

- The collection includes three progressive sets targeting different levels of dyslexia and striving readers:
 - Base Camp: 38 readers (beginning level)
 - Lookout Point: 38 readers (intermediate level)
 - Summit: 48 readers (advanced level)
- Each set contains paired connected texts for each phonics skill focus: 1 fiction and 1 nonfiction book per skill.

Book Design Features

- Text Structure: 95% decodability with bolded high-frequency words
- Layout: Illustrations and text are presented separately on different pages
- Vocabulary Support: Key vocabulary words highlighted throughout
- Extended Learning: Read-aloud passages at the end of each book
- Skill Practice: Extra word reading practice for target sound-spelling relationships and high-frequency words

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

Teachers can:

- Deliver daily phonics-based lessons using decodable texts, following the provided scope and sequence to reinforce phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Guide students through repeated readings while tracking progress using fluency logs, "miles on the page" charts, and celebrating milestones through goal check-ins or classroom recognition
- Monitor student development through observation checklists and reading logs to inform ongoing instruction

Students can:

- Read decodable texts designed to build phonics skills and experience reading success without relying on picture cues
- Develop expressive language and comprehension by predicting outcomes, exploring rich illustrations after reading each page, and responding to comprehension questions



RESOURCES

Instructional Components

- Comprehension Support: Comprehension questions included with each book
- Structured Literacy: Activities addressing all five pillars of structured literacy at the end of each book
- Teacher Resources: Comprehensive instructional materials
- Professional Development: Teacher training and support materials

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

- Engage with stories that reflect diverse learning experiences, such as fidgeting or organizational challenges
- Build fluency, vocabulary, and background knowledge through rereading paired fiction and nonfiction texts across topic sets
- Strengthen executive functioning skills using visual schedules, graphic organizers, and story sequencing activities that support planning, attention, and goal-setting
- Access advanced vocabulary through extended read-aloud sections that expand language beyond their independent reading level
- Deepen engagement through wide reading opportunities, including quad texts and optional multimedia supports

OUTPUTS

Teachers will:

- Implement structured, coherent literacy instruction that develops foundational reading skills across diverse learners
- Foster supportive learning environments that encourage student persistence, engagement, and ownership of reading progress
- Use ongoing assessment and data-informed practices to tailor instruction and ensure all students receive necessary support

Students will:

- Engage with accessible, decodable texts that build foundational reading skills and support long-term literacy development
- Benefit from inclusive, distraction-free materials designed for diverse learning profiles, including those with dyslexia, ADHD, and executive functioning challenges
- Participate in meaningful reading routines that build fluency, confidence, and motivation through repeated practice
- Discuss rich illustrations and respond to comprehension questions to develop expressive language skills
- Complete scaffolded activities that support planning, organization, and sustained engagement
- Read paired fiction and nonfiction texts to reinforce key concepts and expand background knowledge
- Track their reading volume over time to build independence and celebrate progress



SHORT-TERM AND INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Teachers will deliver evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with the Science of Reading.
- Teachers will meet the needs of neurodiverse learners, including those with dyslexia, ADHD, and executive functioning challenges.
- Teachers will create coherent, engaging learning experiences by using paired fiction and nonfiction texts to reinforce background knowledge and vocabulary.
- Teachers will support expressive language and comprehension by facilitating rich discussions, guided reflection, and language-based interactions around text and illustration.
- Teachers will foster reading fluency and motivation through routines that encourage rereading, goal-setting, and celebration of student progress (“miles on the page”).
- Teachers will deepen their understanding of structured literacy through ongoing professional development, embedded instructional tools, and clear scope and sequence materials.
- Students will develop stronger foundational literacy skills and improved decoding ability.
- Students will increase reading fluency, confidence, and intrinsic motivation to read.
- Students will enhance language comprehension and executive functioning skills through active reflection and discussion.
- Students will expand their vocabulary, background knowledge, and deepen their understanding across genres and topics.
- Students will become more independent, confident, and motivated readers with sustained reading habits.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- Teachers are empowered to deliver differentiated, evidence-based instruction efficiently, enabling more time for individualized support and fostering student progress.
- Students demonstrate sustained growth in decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills, leading to improved literacy outcomes and academic success.
- Students develop greater confidence and engagement as they experience personalized, accessible reading materials that celebrate their unique strengths.
- Students develop increased reading fluency that creates a powerful "spill-over effect," enhancing their comprehension and success across all academic subjects throughout their educational journey.
- Students develop a stronger sense of belonging and reading identity as they see themselves reflected in diverse stories and explore varied topics that connect to their interests and experiences across multiple genres.
- Schools strengthen their literacy programs by leveraging data and embedded supports from Tumbleweed materials to promote equity and continuous instructional improvement.



ASSUMPTIONS

- Teachers have access to printed or digital Tumbleweed decodable texts and accompanying instructional materials to implement lessons effectively.
- Classrooms are equipped with supportive tools (e.g., headphones, reading logs, or fluency tracking charts) to facilitate focused, distraction-free reading experiences for neurodiverse learners.
- Administrators allow educators to receive professional development and ongoing support to implement Tumbleweed’s Science of Reading-aligned strategies and to use embedded tools for monitoring student progress.
- Schools allocate time and resources for teachers to conduct regular student assessments and data reviews to inform targeted interventions and instructional adjustments.

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