



IMPROVING DECODING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES 6-8

Course Description

Improving Decoding Skills and Strategies 6–8 is an interactive, online and in-person professional development course designed for all teachers of grades 6–8. The six online sessions focus on understanding the role of decoding in reading instruction for the middle-school student. The sessions teach effective syllabication strategies to help students decode multisyllabic words and learn how to use morphemes to decode words and build vocabulary. The program also has an effective, systematic, and explicit intervention program for students who struggle with decoding.

- Sessions 1 and 2 focus on early decoding. They cover foundational skills such as developing phonological awareness, learning basic sound-spelling correspondences, and understanding the importance of automaticity. The role of decoding instruction with respect to students' stages of reading development is emphasized.
- Sessions 3–5 cover the essential skills related to decoding instruction at the intermediate grades. Session 3 discusses the relationship between reading multisyllabic words fluently and comprehension, as well as the links between decoding and spelling proficiency. The characteristics of effective phonics instruction are also emphasized. You will also learn how to assess students' decoding needs through screening, diagnostic tests and ongoing assessment. Session 4 covers the six basic syllable types—open, closed, *r*-controlled, vowel team, consonant + *le*, and final *e*—and effective instructional techniques. Session 5 covers the teaching of morphemes, such as prefixes, suffixes, and Greek and Latin roots.
- The course concludes with Session 6, designing an effective intervention program to build students' decoding and spelling skills. It also includes suggestions on how to manage differentiated instruction in the classroom.

All online sessions are supported by lesson plans and classroom resources to ensure that the course content can be seamlessly integrated into classroom reading programs or subject-specific curriculum. Also available for purchase with this course is SIPPS, a research-based, classroom tested phonics intervention program for middle grade students.

Course Objectives

On completing this course, you will be able to:

- **explain** the role of decoding in intermediate grades reading instruction and distinguish early decoding (grades K–2) from advanced decoding (grades 3–8).
- **use** assessment tools to screen for early decoding deficiencies, diagnose decoding needs, and check for progress in decoding proficiency.
- **identify** the six characteristics of effective phonics instruction and incorporate them into your daily phonics lessons.
- **analyze** the six syllable types in words—open, closed, *r*-controlled, consonant + *le*, vowel team, and silent *e*—and determine the best techniques for teaching them.
- **recognize** morphemes—such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots—and teach students how to use them to decode and define unfamiliar multisyllabic words.
- **design** an effective decoding program to meet the needs of all your students.

Course Outline

Course Introduction

- 1.2 Course Keynote
- Self-Assessment

2. Background: What Is Decoding?

- 2.1 Understanding Decoding
- 2.2 The Stages of Reading Development
- 2.3 Foundations of Language
- 2.4 Phonological Awareness
- 2.5 Building Phonics Skills
- 2.6 Becoming Automatic with Words

3. Phonics for Grades 6-8

- 3.1 Phonics: What? When? Why?
- 3.2 Phonics: The Link to Comprehension
- 3.3 Phonics: The Link to Spelling
- 3.4 Key Characteristics of Phonics Instruction
- 3.5 Teaching an Effective Phonics Lesson
- 3.6 Assessing Phonics Skills

4. Syllabication and Reading

- 4.1 What Is a Syllable?
- 4.2 Teaching Closed Syllables
- 4.3 Teaching Open Syllables
- 4.4 Teaching Other Syllable Types
- 4.5 Syllables: Whole Class Activities
- 4.6 Syllables: Small Group and Independent Activities

5. Morphemes and Reading

- 5.1 What Is a Morpheme?
- 5.2 Teaching Prefixes
- 5.3 Teaching Suffixes
- 5.4 Teaching Inflections
- 5.5 Teaching Greek and Latin Roots
- 5.6 Teaching Structural Analysis: Other Useful Word Parts

6. Building an Intervention Program

- 6.1 Guiding Principles
- 6.2 Assessment: Who Needs What?
- 6.3 Basic Decoding: Filling in the Gaps
- 6.4 Building Strong Spellers
- 6.5 Helping Students Struggling with Big Words
- 6.6 Wrap-up: Setting Up Your Classroom