



IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION, GRADES 3-5

Course Description

Improving Reading Comprehension, an interactive, online, and in-person professional development course, is designed for teachers and content specialists of Grades 3-5 who aim to improve their students' reading comprehension of nonfiction text. The course focuses on the building blocks of comprehension such as:

- Building background knowledge and language for reading.
- Assessing and improving reading fluency.
- Developing vocabulary through direct teaching, independent strategies, and wide reading.
- Fostering and modeling skills for active and strategic reading.
- Writing for understanding.

As participants explore each of these blocks, they'll learn practical strategies to help students succeed in each area. All online sessions are supported by lesson plans and extensive classroom resources to ensure that your learning can be seamlessly integrated into your current reading program.

Course Objectives

On completing this course, teachers will be able to:

- **Provide** explicit reading and writing instruction for students who are struggling with comprehension.
- **Understand** the research about reading comprehension and what can be done about students with comprehension difficulties.
- **Model** best practices in reading strategies for your students in the classroom.
- **Teach** strategies that will build background knowledge, vocabulary, and fluency.
- **Use** lesson resources that specifically address ways to teach expository reading and writing in response to text.

Course Outline

1 Course Introduction

1.1 The Importance of Reading
Self-Assessment

2 A Look at the Research

2.1 Overview: When Students Struggle
2.2 Stages of Reading Development
2.3 The Cycle of Failure
2.4 Helping Students Succeed

3 Building the Bridge to Comprehension

3.1 Overview: Getting the Most from Text
3.2 What Do Active Readers Do?
3.3 The Building Blocks of the Bridge
3.4 Teaching Skills and Strategies
3.5 Before, During, and After Reading

4 Assessing Reading Health

- 4.1 Overview: What's a Reading Physical?
- 4.2 Four Types of Readers
- 4.3 Oral Fluency Assessment
- 4.4 Scoring an Oral Fluency Assessment

5 Knowledge and Language for Reading

- 5.1 Overview: "Get the Picture?"
- 5.2 Warm-up: Making a Mental Picture
- 5.3 Mental Models and Reading
- 5.4 Previewing a Text
- 5.5 Creating a Smart Chart
- 5.6 Four Ways to Build Mental Models

6 Improving Reading Fluency

- 6.1 Overview: What Is Fluency?
- 6.2 Warm-up: Reading Word Stew
- 6.3 Modeling Fluent Reading
- 6.4 Repeated-Timed Reading
- 6.5 Phrase-Cued Reading
- 6.6 Independent Fluency Practice

7 Vocabulary: A Direct Approach

- 7.1 Overview: Words in the Bank
- 7.2 Warm-up: Words, Words, Words
- 7.3 Selecting Words to Teach
- 7.4 Direct Teaching of Vocabulary
- 7.5 Mapping a Concept Definition

8 Vocabulary: Becoming Independent

- 8.1 Overview: Becoming Independent
- 8.2 Warm-up: Looking for Meaning
- 8.3 Using Context
- 8.4 Prefixes and Suffixes
- 8.5 Using Word Roots to Get Meaning
- 8.6 Wide Reading: Best Source of Vocabulary Growth

9 Developing Active and Strategic Readers

- 9.1 Overview: Getting Meaning from Text
- 9.2 Warm-up: Think About Your Thinking
- 9.3 Building Background and Questioning
- 9.4 Making Inferences
- 9.5 Summarizing
- 9.6 Modeling Self-Monitoring Strategies

10 Getting the Most from Expository Text

- 10.1 Overview: Reading "the New"
- 10.2 Warm-up: Take a Reading Challenge
- 10.3 Features of Expository Text
- 10.4 Using Graphic Organizers
- 10.5 Identifying the Main Idea
- 10.6 Talking About Texts

11 Getting Started with Paragraphs

- 11.1 Overview: The Reading and Writing Circle
- 11.2 Warm-up: Quickwrite
- 11.3 The Comprehension-Composition Connection
- 11.4 Getting Started with Sentences
- 11.5 Five Steps to Writing a Paragraph

12 Writing a Persuasive Paragraph

- 12.1 Overview: Writing Like a Reader
- 12.2 Warm-up: Reading and Writing for Style
- 12.3 Using a "Hamburger Organizer"
- 12.4 Writing an Effective Argument
- 12.5 Sharpening the Argument

13 Classroom Management: Putting It All Together

- 13.1 Overview: Recipe for Success
- 13.2 Setting Expectations and Motivating
- 13.3 Strategies for Engaging Students
- 13.4 Matching Students to Text
- 13.5 Monitoring Student Progress
- 13.6 The Reading Block