



Building Foundational Skills: Phonics, Word Study, and Comprehension

Course Description

Building Foundational Skills: Phonics, Word Study, and Comprehension is an interactive, online, and in-person professional development course designed to guide teachers, literacy coaches, and reading specialists of students in **grades 3–12** to build the foundational skills students need to be successful readers. The six online sessions focus on deepening knowledge of effective decoding instruction and the benefits of using an intervention program to accelerate reading success for older students. Learners will enhance their understanding and gain strategies to teach foundational skills, including phonemic awareness, breaking words into syllables, and identifying morphemes, while emphasizing word meaning.

- **Session 1** provides an overview of the building blocks that lead to reading comprehension, including phonemic awareness, phonics, and automaticity.
- **Session 2** examines strategies, resources, and assessments to successfully implement an intervention program for older students who demonstrate gaps in foundational reading skills.
- **Session 3** explores components of effective phonics instruction and provides strategies to teach consonants and vowels.
- **Session 4** focuses on how to teach the six syllable types and guide students to use vowel spots to break apart and comprehend long words.
- **Session 5** introduces the importance of teaching morphemes and provides strategies to help students use word parts to enhance comprehension.
- **Session 6** examines the connection between decoding and word meaning in order to help accelerate reading success for older students.

The online sessions include lesson plans and classroom resources for integrating the course content seamlessly into classroom literacy programs or subject-specific curriculums.

Course Faculty

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Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Define key terms in foundational reading and understand the importance of teaching foundational skills to older, struggling readers.
- Implement an effective intervention program that meets the individual needs of older readers.
- Use multiple strategies to teach phonemic awareness and phonics to support reading comprehension and spelling skills.
- Teach students how to identify the six types of syllables and use strategies to decode multisyllabic words.
- Identify and plan lessons that enhance students' understanding of morphemes and guide them to use word parts to make meaning.
- Integrate effective word meaning instruction into phonics lessons to improve decoding and comprehension.

Course Outline

1. Understanding the Importance of Decoding

- 1.1 Exploring the Foundations of Language
- 1.2 Understanding Phonemic Awareness
- 1.3 Understanding Phonics
- 1.4 Becoming Automatic With Words

CheckPoint

Your Turn

2. Implementing an Intervention Program

- 2.1 Guiding Principles of Effective Intervention
- 2.2 Assessing Fluency, Phonics, and Phonemic Awareness
- 2.3 Reaching Readers at Different Levels
- 2.4 Strengthening Spelling Skills with Phonics
- 2.5 Creating an Effective Learning Environment

CheckPoint

Your Turn

3. Teaching Phonics for Reading Success

- 3.1 Implementing Decoding Instruction
- 3.2 Teaching an Effective Phonics Lesson
- 3.3 Teaching Consonants: Auditory and Visual Discrimination
- 3.4 Teaching Vowels: Contrasting Long and Short
- 3.5 Teaching Vowels: Contrasting Short Vowels
- 3.6 Teaching Segmenting: Words Into Sounds

CheckPoint

Your Turn

4. Breaking Words Into Syllables

- 4.1 Getting to Know the Syllable Types
- 4.2 Teaching the Concept of Syllables
- 4.3 Teaching Closed and Open Syllables
- 4.4 Teaching Other Syllable Types
- 4.5 Leading Whole-Group Syllable Practice
- 4.6 Planning Syllable Activities for Small Group

CheckPoint

Your Turn

5. Identifying Morphemes to Unlock Meaning

- 5.1 Breaking Words Into Morphemes
- 5.2 Teaching Prefixes
- 5.3 Teaching Suffixes and Inflectional Endings
- 5.4 Teaching Base-Word Changes
- 5.5 Teaching Greek and Latin Roots
- 5.6 Teaching Morphological Word Families

CheckPoint

Your Turn

6. Improving Comprehension With Word Meaning

- 6.1 Strengthening Decoding With Word Meaning
- 6.2 Planning Effective Word Meaning Lessons
- 6.3 Deepening Word Knowledge for Comprehension
- 6.4 Supporting English Language Learners
- 6.5 Endnote

CheckPoint

Your Turn

Building Foundational Skills: Phonics, Word Study, and Comprehension

Building Foundational Skills: Phonics, Word Study, and Comprehension is an interactive, online, and in-person professional development course designed to guide teachers, literacy coaches, and reading specialists of students in grades 3–12 to build the foundational skills students need to be successful readers. The six online sessions focus on deepening knowledge of effective decoding and word study instruction and the benefits of using an intervention program to accelerate reading success for older students. Learners will enhance their understanding and gain strategies to teach foundational skills, including phonemic awareness, breaking words into syllables, and identifying morphemes, while emphasizing word meaning.

COURSE RESEARCH BASE

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Session 1: Understanding the Importance of Decoding	
Without intensive intervention, weak phonics skills are likely to impede students' learning in subsequent years (Lipka, Lesaux, & Siegel, 2006).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV explain the process of decoding and the role it plays in building strong foundational reading skills for all students, especially those in the later grades.
Before Anglo-Saxon, or Middle English, French words had established two enduring traits of English. First, letters of the alphabet—either alone or in combination—can stand for more than one sound. Second, a word's spelling usually reflects its language of origin (Invernizzi & Hayes, 2004).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text examines the origins of the English language and the phonemes (44 discrete sounds) and graphemes (letters that represent sounds) that are essential for students learning to read.
If a student lacks phonemic awareness, instruction in this area will quickly improve his or her reading ability (Reading & Van Deuren, 2007).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text introduces tasks to build and strengthen phonemic awareness and phonological awareness. • The RedTV classroom video modeling demonstrates how to use a phoneme manipulation task to improve phonemic awareness.
To become proficient readers, students must understand the alphabetic principle: the correspondence between sounds and letters (Adams, 1994).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV provide strategies to explicitly teach the alphabetic principle, an essential component for learning to read.
"Practice strengthens connections between words and letter patterns in long-term memory [and] unitizes these letter patterns in memory so that they can be processed as whole units" (Schwanenflugel et al., 2006).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV highlight the importance of automaticity and fluency and introduce strategies to teach these important skills.

Building Foundational Skills *(continued)*

COURSE RESEARCH BASE

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Session 2: Implementing an Intervention Program	
Approximately one-third of fourth graders and one-fourth of eighth graders read at levels insufficient for proper comprehension of text (National Assessment Governing Board, 2007).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV explain the importance of effective intervention to accelerate foundational reading skills. • The course text clearly defines specific elements for an effective intervention program.
"Older students vary greatly in both the causes and manifestations of their reading problems" (Boardman et al., 2008).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text summarizes various assessments to guide educators to target reading intervention. • The RedTV provides educators practice in matching students with the best assessment to target intervention.
Academic confidence comes from experiencing academic success daily (Pressley et al., 2006).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV share activities for whole class, small group, and when working independently suggestions for educators to engage students at all levels.
Students receiving phonics instruction are not only better able to read words—they are also better able to spell them (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV explore effective spelling strategies and routines to help students become proficient readers.
Setting goals provides motivation and encourages the involvement and behaviors that are associated with achievement (Boardman et al., 2008).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV provide strategies to engage older students in a positive and motivating environment that enhances learning and reduces behavior problems.

Building Foundational Skills *(continued)*

COURSE RESEARCH BASE	COURSE IMPLEMENTATION
Session 3: Teaching Phonics for Reading Success	
<p>Programs including systematic, explicit instruction in letter-sound correspondences lead to higher achievement in reading and spelling (Christensen & Bowey, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV emphasize characteristics of successful phonics instruction that engages older readers.
<p>Scaffolded instruction provides a framework within which students can understand each component of the task. It presents learners with just the right amount of challenge (Clark & Graves, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text explains the gradual release model so teachers can move students toward independently completing tasks. • The RedTV classroom video modeling demonstrates how to use the gradual release model when teaching decoding to older students.
<p>Where a student lacks a distinct grasp of the consonant sounds, reading and spelling growth are impeded (Adams, 2009).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course explores strategies for teaching older students to distinguish consonant sounds using visual and auditory senses. • The RedTV provides an example of an auditory discrimination to distinguish consonant sounds.
<p>"Learning to spell and decode vowels depends on explicit awareness that every vowel has a long sound and a short sound" (Adams, 2009).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text addresses challenges involved with teaching various vowel sounds and how educators can help students distinguish the sounds. • The RedTV provides examples of routines to help students discriminate between long and short vowel sounds.
<p>"Learning to read and spell the vowels depends on learning to hear the subtle differences between them" (Adams, 2009).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and the RedTV introduce additional activities to help students discriminate between various short vowel sounds, even when there are only slight differences in pronunciation.
<p>"Understanding the alphabetic principle depends on learning to perceive phonemes as distinct and separable units of speech" (Adams, 2009).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text emphasizes the importance of segmenting words so students understand how sounds combine to form words. • The RedTV classroom video modeling demonstrates how to teach a small group lesson that focuses on distinguishing phonemes.

Building Foundational Skills *(continued)*

COURSE RESEARCH BASE

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Session 4: Breaking Words Into Syllables	
When students quickly and accurately recognize the syllable types, they can independently read long words (Knight-McKenna, 2008).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text highlights the importance of teaching students syllabication to aid decoding and introduces the six syllable types.
"Skilled readers' ability to recognize a long word depends on whether they can chunk it into syllables in the course of perceiving it" (Adams, 2009).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text explores strategies to introduce syllabication to students. The RedTV classroom video modeling demonstrates how to guide students to identify vowel spots to split words into syllables.
"One reason that multisyllabic words are hard is that the system shifts from the closed syllable patterns of basic English toward the open and closed patterns of the Latin languages" (Adams, 2009).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text and RedTV explain a step-by-step strategy to break apart multisyllabic words so students can start decoding longer words containing closed and open syllables.
"Sometimes figuring out a new word depends on trying more than one option. Doing so requires flexibility, confidence, and knowledge" (Adams, 2009).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text explains how to guide students to approximate pronunciations of new words based on the six syllable types. The RedTV provides an example of a sorting activity to help students to use knowledge of syllable types.
When direct skills instruction is combined with strategy instruction and practice, readers make significant improvements (Bhattacharya & Ehri, 2004).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text and RedTV highlight strategies to explicitly use with whole groups to heighten students' awareness of syllables in words.
"Quick speed drills, conducted as challenge games to achieve a goal, can build automatic recognition of syllables" (Moats, 2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text and RedTV guide educators to use speed drills during small group and independent practice to strengthen spelling skills.

Building Foundational Skills *(continued)*

COURSE RESEARCH BASE

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Session 5: Identifying Morphemes to Unlock Meaning	
When students understand the meaning of component morphemes and are able to quickly pronounce them as parts of longer words, the speed and accuracy of their reading improves (Nagy, 2005).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text and RedTV explain the importance of teaching students morphemic analysis to decode and understand the meaning of words.
When students are decoding unknown multisyllabic words, it is to their advantage to know affixes. Such knowledge will also help in learning the meanings of words (Fischer, 2003).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text and RedTV focus on teaching the most common prefixes to expand students' reading vocabularies.
Studies support the effectiveness of teaching prefixes, suffixes, and other word parts as clues to meaning (Baumann et al., 2003).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text and RedTV explain the difference between suffixes and inflectional endings and examine teaching students to use them to determine word meaning.
A study with urban fourth- and fifth-graders in California suggests that breaking down words into meaningful parts is effective for both Spanish-dominant English language learners and English-dominant students (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text and RedTV introduce three common base-word changes so students can identify words with spelling changes.
Beyond vocabulary, understanding of morphology is related to reading comprehension (Carlisle & Rice, 2002).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text introduces Greek and Latin roots to develop students' understanding of words. The RedTV classroom video modeling demonstrates a step-by-step routine for analyzing words with Greek and Latin roots.
"Morphological analysis brings a new, detective-like dimension to the literacy challenge, promoting the student's knowledge of spelling and meanings at once" (Adams, 2009).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course text defines morphological word families and explores their role in helping students decode and comprehend new words.

Building Foundational Skills *(continued)*

COURSE RESEARCH BASE

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Session 6: Improving Comprehension With Word Meaning

<p>"After students learn to decode, further growth of their reading comprehension depends on their knowledge of word meanings" (Jule, Biancarosa, Coker, & Deffes, 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV emphasize the importance of explicitly teaching vocabulary to accelerate reading achievement of older students.
<p>"[R]eading instruction does not end when students can decode the words. They continue to need instruction that will support their understanding of what they are reading" (Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, & Joshi, 2007).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text explains how educators can include morphological awareness and word meaning into their explicit vocabulary instruction. • The RedTV models a step-by-step routine for explicit vocabulary instruction.
<p>"If a student's understanding of a word is limited to a narrow definition or stereotypical contexts, then many applications of the word will not be comprehensible and the student will have only limited opportunities to use the word in speech and writing" (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTV provide guidance to help teachers focus on multiple-meaning words and appropriate contexts to deepen word knowledge.
<p>"While students learning to read in their first language have already acquired from 5,000 to 7,000 words before they begin formal reading in school, this word count is not commonly found among ELLs" (Wallace, 2008).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text explores strategies to support English language learners, in reading including explicit vocabulary instruction and teaching cognates.
<p>"As children learn more words, they learn to think about the world in more sophisticated ways. It is this sophistication, rather than a particular group of words, that leads to understanding" (Stahl, 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text summarizes the ways to accelerate phonics success with foundational reading skills and move towards greater comprehension.

Building Foundational Skills: Phonics, Word Study, and Comprehension
Scholastic RED Professional Development Course Participation Hours

Description	Estimated Time	Participation Hours
Self-paced instruction includes the relevant reading research base. Participation in interactive simulations for practice of research-based strategies. Video modeling by teachers	1 hours per session plus additional time to revisit concepts and key activities for ongoing practice	9
Reflection on learned and applied skills; sharing of ideas and student work; lesson planning; facilitator modeling, in-person instruction and in-class coaching	2 hours x 4 study groups; 3 hours in-class coaching	11
Personal journal writing in response to session-specific topics and prompts	30-minutes per session	3
Collaborative discussions with colleagues and advice/feedback from reading specialist	30-minutes per session	3
Relevant articles to read study and connect to learning and classroom application	30-minutes per session	3
Print and review online resources (lesson plans, management tools, graphic organizers, etc.) – for planning and application in classroom	30-minutes per session	3
Preparation for application of learned skills and strategies utilizing tested lesson plans and student resources	1 hour per strategy	11
Preparation and presentation of course learning	1 hour	1
Setting goals and incorporating into Professional Development Plan	30 minutes	½-hour
Review online correlations to standards and reading programs; use online correlations in preparing lesson plans for classroom application	30 minutes	½-hour
Total Hours		45