



# 2022-2023 Three-Credit Hour Course: Helping Struggling Readers

- ▶ **Audience:** Active West Virginia Teachers/Educators
- ▶ **Type:** Self-Paced with Rolling Enrollment
- ▶ **Enrollment:** September 1, 2022 - April 14, 2023
- ▶ **Duration:** September 1, 2022 - May 19, 2023

**Description:** This course focuses on supporting the academic development of students who are competent decoders but who struggle to understand the meaning of what they read. Participants will explore the different types of comprehension difficulties students may face and will be introduced to a number of research-based strategies to improve reading comprehension skills. Instructional strategies will focus on building vocabulary skills, using teacher modeling, having students work collaboratively, and building comprehension-monitoring skills. Participants will complete session projects that 1) address specific comprehension strategies, 2) develop questioning techniques regarding vocabulary development, 3) use of the QAR strategy, 4) reciprocal teaching and think alouds, 5) use of graphic organizers and 6) and MAZE assessment options.

## Course Goals:

- ▶ Understand what reading comprehension is.
- ▶ Recognize why students struggle with comprehension skills.
- ▶ Utilize a variety of strategies to strengthen reading comprehension.
- ▶ Understand that comprehension of words must be understood before text can be comprehended.
- ▶ Understand that the teaching of reading is most effective when vocabulary instruction is rich in student interest.
- ▶ Understand that communication improves vocabulary.
- ▶ Understand that engaging vocabulary is pertinent.
- ▶ Understand the importance of questioning and monitoring skills in developing comprehension.
- ▶ Develop a presentation or an activity to introduce students to using QAR questioning skills during reading.
- ▶ Discuss benefits/challenges of teaching monitoring through questioning while reading,
- ▶ Understand the components of reciprocal teaching.
- ▶ Understand how to assess comprehension through think alouds and reciprocal teaching,
- ▶ Utilize different tools to increase student comprehension.
- ▶ Develop an understanding of the benefits of using graphic organizers and other writing strategies in developing comprehension in reading.
- ▶ Consider the diverse reading abilities and learning styles of students.
- ▶ Summarize and authenticate how various graphic organizers support reading and writing instruction for comprehension.
- ▶ Utilize the information gleaned in the readings/ videos to construct lessons implementing a variety of graphic organizers.



- ▶ Understand current comprehensive reading research regarding methodologies.
- ▶ Understand why it is important to assess reading comprehension.
- ▶ Understand how to create and/ or utilize reading comprehension assessments.

## **Session Overviews**

### ▶ **Session 1 – Why Students Struggle**

*During Session One participants will gain a deeper understanding of reading comprehension. Participants will be able to recognize the key areas of reading comprehension and the strategies students need to be able to process information they read. Participants will utilize the comprehension strategies and think about how to use these strategies in the classroom. The use of ongoing formative assessment tools is imperative to ensure student success and alleviate reading comprehension discrepancies will be addressed during this session. The session project will ask participants to create goals for their students by utilizing comprehension strategies that are available in the session readings.*

### ▶ **Session 2 - Building Vocabulary to Enhance Reading Comprehension**

*At times it appears that our students read without truly comprehending the text. They can decode and pronounce words, but the meaning of the text is vague. In this session you will focus on the crucial component of comprehending vocabulary. Strategies for teaching vocabulary will be introduced in your readings. You will explore the link between vocabulary and reading comprehension. Vocabulary development is needed for both learning to read and reading to learn. In the session project, you will choose a strategy for teaching vocabulary and describe your goals for student comprehension.*

### ▶ **Session 3 - Questioning and Monitoring**

*The focus for this session is to help students monitor their own comprehension by asking questions as they are reading. Students must learn how to engage and connect with the text so that they may develop meaning and recognize if they are understanding or need help with the text. Readers who are monitoring their comprehension through questioning strategies will be thinking critically so that they may be able to locate textual evidence, draw conclusions, and make inferences. You will gain ideas and methods to spark this thinking in your students while they are reading to help improve their own understanding. During the session reflection, share ideas about how you will develop these skills and challenges you will have improving your students' questioning and monitoring skills usage while reading. In this session you will create a presentation or an activity to use with your students and share it with your colleagues.*

### ▶ **Session 4 – Reciprocal Teaching and Think Alouds**

*The goal of reading is comprehension. Often, students who struggle with reading comprehension are not sure how to make sense of the text that they are reading. Because they are trying to comprehend, they often lose the information they have already read. During this session you will learn how to model effective strategies that will increase your students' reading comprehension, with specific focus on reciprocal teaching and think alouds. You will learn how to implement these strategies in your classroom so that your students will be able to have a better understanding of the text they are reading. As you complete each of these tasks, think about the effects that using these strategies could have on your students' comprehension abilities in your classroom.*



▶ **Session 5 – Graphic Organizers and Writing**

*The strategic focus of this session is to learn how to develop and utilize graphic organizers. Graphic organizers are visual aids that help strengthen student comprehension and assist in evaluating what a student knows. The use of these strategies will help to teach students how to ask questions as they read. These digital or non-digital tools will assist, aid, and/ or strengthen your students' comprehension and support the writing process. During this session you will create and implement the strategies that you have learned both digitally and non-digitally to promote the use of graphic organizers. Graphic organizers can be referred as: knowledge maps, concept maps, story maps, cognitive organizers, concept diagrams, pictorial organizers, and/ or web maps.*

▶ **Session 6 – Comprehension Assessment and Reading Research**

*During the last five (5) sessions you were introduced to various ways to help students improve comprehension. In this session you will review some recent research on reading instruction. You will also review some ways you can assess comprehension in the classroom and practice this concept with some session tasks. You will finally create a comprehension assessment piece for your session project. As you complete the tasks in this session, try to envision your classroom and how these strategies could help your struggling readers.*

**Course Grades**

All grades in the course gradebook must be a checkmark for successful course completion. A checkmark indicates that all work has been completed and the work meets the expectations for that assignment. Quiz scores must meet the minimum expectations as stated in the course.

