



Combining Content Knowledge and Comprehension in your Classroom

EDX 51042

Oct. 19-Dec. 12, 2026

2 Credit Hours

Nancy Smith

913-424-5889

nancy.smith@ottawa.edu

Course Description: This course will explore the connections between the Science of Reading, comprehension and K-12 content areas. We will explore the importance of teaching content area vocabulary, utilizing text structures to gather meaning, and explicitly teaching comprehension strategies. Content knowledge and reading comprehension are two important components of literacy, and educators need to show understanding of reading best practices and be able to design effective instructional activities. Helping students achieve higher levels of literacy comprehension is the goal.

Course Role in the Program/Major: This course is being offered as Professional Development for those interested in using technology in the classroom.

Course Prerequisite: No prerequisites for this course.



Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Students will explore strategies that are aligned with the science of reading and enrich students' abilities to comprehend content area text
- Students will investigate ways to design learning experiences that maximize content area knowledge and comprehension
- Students will reflect on ways to improve their own teaching practices through carefully crafted classroom experiences

Course Materials:

Handouts provided by instructor and/or online resources to explore.

Instructor Bio:

Nancy Smith is a National Board Certified first-grade teacher with the Olathe District Schools and she has worked with teacher candidates at OUKC for 30+ years. Her prior experiences include providing home daycare for 17 years and 3 years as an Instructional Resource Teacher with the Olathe Schools. She has a BA in Elementary Education and Special Education and a MS in Curriculum Development with an emphasis on Reading and Language Arts. She is a winner of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching, and she was Olathe's Elementary Teacher of the Year for 2023. Outside of the classroom, she and her husband, Cliff, have 5 grown sons (ages 24-33), three daughters-in-law, a new granddaughter, and another grandchild on the way.



COURSE FORMAT

Online Format: Complete the syllabus assignments by the end of the entire course.

Competency Assessment

1. Promoting Comprehension Summary/Reflection	50 pts
2. Strategy Article Summary and Reflection	50 pts
3. Revised Classroom Lesson Plan	100 pts
4. Bibliography of Comprehension Strategies	50 pts
5. Reading Comprehension/Content Knowledge Reflection	50 pts.
6. Reading Comprehension Strategies Video Reflection	50 pts.

TOTAL POINTS

350 pts

Grading Scale:

Percentage	Grade
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Below 60%	F

IMPORTANT POLICIES

All course-specific policies for this course are spelled out here in this syllabus. However, additional university policies are located in the Ottawa University Student Handbook. You are responsible for reading and understanding all of these policies. All of them are important. Failure to understand or abide by them could have negative consequences for your experience in this course.

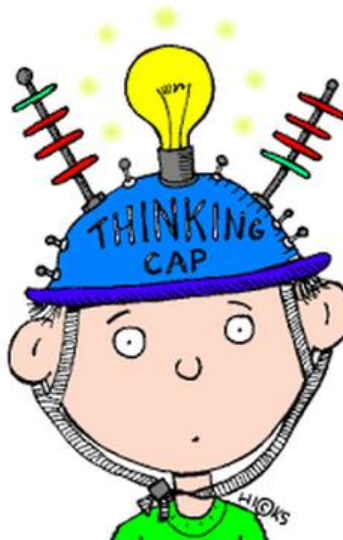
Late Assignments

Due to the timeline of this course, late assignments ARE NOT accepted.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated at any level on any assignment. The reality of cyberspace has made academic dishonesty even more tempting for some, but be advised that technology can and will be used to help uncover those engaging in deception. If you ever have a question about the legitimacy of a source or a procedure you are considering using, ask your instructor. As the University Academic Council approved on May 29, 2003, *“the penalty for plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will be failure in the course in which the academic dishonesty occurred. Students who commit academic dishonesty can be dismissed from the university by the provost/director.”* Please refer to Academic Honesty in the handbook for important information about Ottawa University’s policies regarding plagiarism and cheating, including examples and explanations of these issues. Academic dishonesty also includes turning in work submitted for a grade in another course.

Mission Statement: *Building on its foundation as a Christ-inspired community of grace and open inquiry, Ottawa University prepares professional and liberal arts graduates for lifetimes of personal significance, vocational fulfillment, and service to God and humanity.*



ASSIGNMENTS

Promoting Comprehension Summary and Reflection

50 pts.

Read the article found at <https://www.aft.org/ae/winter2021-2022/catts> . Write a half-page summary and a full-page reflection (double-spaced) on the information provided. Make sure to include personal connections to the information presented.

Strategy Article Summary and Reflection

50 pts.

Read the article found at <https://www.edutopia.org/article/helping-students-read-complex-texts/> . Write a half-page summary and a whole page reflection (double-spaced) on the information provided. Talk about how you could incorporate one or more of the strategies presented in your reading block or your content block. What would you need to adapt or change for your grade level and why? What strategies do you feel most students need the most to be a reader?

Revised Classroom Lesson Plan

100 pts.

Choose a piece of text that you will be using in a future lesson. Take a deeper look at the kinds of questions that you are asking. Use this opportunity to strengthen this lesson plan by adding in more questions in the DOK (Depth of Knowledge) levels 2, 3, and 4. Investigate using Chat GPT or another AI assisted site to help you design a variety of questions. Do you feel like AI generated questions are useful to you? Did your AI site make any mistakes?

Submit a new or revised content area lesson plan that includes the use of literature. Sprinkle higher level questions throughout the lesson that can aid in increasing the comprehension levels of your students.

Bibliography of Comprehension Strategies

50 pts.

Make a document that contains 5 comprehension strategies that are either new to you or that you are not currently using. For each strategy:

- Cite the source
- When would you use this? (ie: science, social studies, health, etc.)
- What materials/resources do you need?
- What topic, theme or unit of study would you see yourself trying it first?
- Why would you use this strategy?

Reading Comprehension/Content Knowledge Reflection

50 pts.

Read the chapter from *Reading Comprehension and Content Knowledge* by Jennifer Jump and Kathleen Kopp that was sent to you by email. Summarize and Reflect on this information in a 1-2 page paper. Is this information new? Does this information validate strategies you're already using? How could you use some of these strategies in your classroom?

Reading Comprehension Strategies Video Reflection

50 pts.

Watch this video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y8Mb2RuvDM&t=30s> . Write a 1-page summary & reflection about the information presented. How would this information be valuable in your classroom? Are you currently using some of these strategies? What is your personal definition of reading comprehension?

