

Improving Reading Comprehension Skills

Instructor & Course Information

Credits	2
Grading	S/U or Letter grade
Instructor	Mrs. Naomi McGaughey
Email	naomi.mcgaughey@und.edu
Phone	701-777-5939
Office Hours	<i>By appointment</i> for a Zoom meeting or email if you have general questions on assignments. (If you are taking the course in the summer, I am rarely in the office, so do not leave a message on my office phone. Email is the best way to get in touch with me.)

About the Professor/Instructor

Welcome to the course! I hope you are excited to learn about middle level education and reading comprehension skills that will help your middle level students. I am thrilled to work with you over the next few weeks. My background is in middle level education and I have over 18 years of experience teaching and working with middle school students, educators, and future teachers who aspire to work in middle schools one day here at the University of North Dakota in our teacher education program. I have taught as a content area teacher in the fields of Geography and Foreign Language and I have also worked as an Instructional Coach supporting middle level educators in a local district with a wide variety of professional development topics right in their own classroom and schoolwide. Currently, I am an Instructor and the Program Area Coordinator for Middle Level Education at the University of North Dakota and I have the opportunity to teach two of the four workshop courses for teachers who are looking to gain their middle level endorsement through UND's Professional Development Courses for Educators.

Course Description and Objectives

The reading comprehension skills you will learn in this course are tools that good readers use, consciously or subconsciously, to help them make meaning from what they read. These strategies will not address decoding skills or the most basic of reading skills. However, you can use them to enhance what is already occurring in your classroom. We have found that learning these strategies empowers readers at all levels of competency to become more proficient at making meaning, to comprehend text more fluently, and to become more engaged in their reading. These skills will help them to learn your content area. You will learn to teach these strategies explicitly, using the gradual release of responsibility model.

After completing this course, you should be able to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Identify the strategies proficient readers use.
2. Examine the value of explicitly teaching comprehension strategies within your content area and why it is important to teach reading comprehension in all content areas.

3. Analyze the use of schema within your own reading practices. What strategies do you use when reading for your own pleasure and your own learning?
4. Design a series of lessons within your content area to teach one of the proficient reader strategies, using the gradual release of responsibility model.

Textbook and Course Materials

Tovani, C. (2021). *Why Do I Have to Read This?*. Portsmouth, NH: Stenhouse. ISBN: 978-1-62531-151-1

******You will need access to a video camera or computer to produce a 10–15 minute video of yourself modeling the connection strategy.**

Technical Requirements

You will use Microsoft Word to complete assignments. Students are expected to use their official UND email in the course. The [UND technical support webpage](#) contains information on your UND email and how to download a free version of Microsoft Office.

[View the basic technical requirements](#) for every online course.

Course Overview and Organization

This course contains 6 lessons designed to focus your study of strategies related middle level philosophical education and to assist you in achieving the course learning objectives/outcomes. You will work through a combination of required readings, assignments and projects related to the topics for each of the 6 lessons.

Lesson 1: Getting to Know You

- **Lesson Objective:** Introduce yourself and share your background knowledge in reading and your philosophy on teaching reading in your content area.
- **Assignment:** A short biography and background information on your personal reading history, style and preferences, as well as your philosophy about teaching reading in your subject area. (10 points)

Lesson 2: Here's What You Need to Know

- **Lesson Objective:** Reflect on reading strategies, primarily the gradual release of responsibility and how this is helpful to students in your content area.
- **Assignment:** Introduction to the strategies and the gradual release of responsibility model. Read the Harvey chapter and respond. (10 points)

Lesson 3: Dryland Training!

- **Lesson Objective:** Familiarize yourself with a variety of reading strategy tools available through the attachments and the Tovani text.
- **Assignment:** Read Tovani text and respond using the tools provided. (30 points)

Lesson 4: Get Your Feet Wet!

- **Lesson Objective:** Create a video modeling the connection strategy and reflect on the use of this strategy in your content area.
- **Assignment:** Create a video of you modeling the connection strategy. You will also write a two-page reflection paper about your video-taped lesson and how you feel it went. (40 points)

Lesson 5: Dive In!

- **Lesson Objective:** Design a unit in your content area utilizing the given reading strategies.

- **Assignment:** Design a unit for your own class on a proficient reader strategy of your choice, using the gradual release of responsibility model. (40 points)

Lesson 6: Look How Far You've Come!

- **Lesson Objective:** Summarize your understanding of the materials learned and practiced throughout this course.
- **Assignment:** Summarize your understanding of the material, the feasibility of incorporating this into your curriculum, and how your feelings about "teaching reading" have or have not changed. (50 points)

Assessment and Grading

This course is made up of a series of assessments which will be graded. You will complete a combination of work that focuses on reading in your content area.

- There will be 3 reflections in the course (50 points total)
- There will be 1 lesson plan created utilizing the reading strategies focused on in the course (a lesson plan template is provided for you to follow. If you have another template that you currently use in your lesson planning, please share that with the Instructor as an option to use instead.) The main focus of this unit will be how you utilize the reading strategies within your content area. (40 points)
- There will be 1 video-taped lesson that you will submit either via Blackboard or a YouTube link (which can be a private link). This lesson should be 10-15 minutes in length and should focus on a reading strategy that is discussed and approved by the Instructor prior to completing the lesson. You have the option to teach this to an actual class of students or you can act as though you are teaching a group of students. The goal is to choose a reading strategy that you would like to focus on for this lesson and utilize with students in your content area. (40 points)
- The final for this course will be your summarization of understanding reading strategies you learned about throughout this course as well as to see how these strategies may fit into your content area. (50 points)

Grading Scale

A	100% - 90%	180 – 162 points
B	89% - 80%	161 – 144 points
C	79% - 70%	143 – 126 points
D	69% - 60%	125 – 108 points
F	59% - 0%	107 - Below

Netiquette

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Here are a few basic points to remember when communicating in this course:

- **Be scholarly.** Use proper language, grammar, and spelling. Explain your thoughts, justify opinions, and credit the ideas of others by citing or linking to scholarly resources. Avoid misinforming others when you are unsure of the answer. When discussing something and supplying a guess, clearly state that.
- **Be respectful.** Respect the privacy of others. Do not share personal or professional information about others unless permission has been granted. Respect diversity and opinions that differ from their own. Be tactful when you communicate.
- **Be professional.** Everyone should strive to give their best impression online. Truthfulness, accuracy, and running a final spell check are appropriate expectations for university students. Writing in a

legible font and limiting the use of emoticons is considered professional behavior. Profanity and participation in hostile interactions, known as flaming, is unprofessional as well as disruptive.

- **Be polite.** Students should be addressing professors and instructors by the appropriate title or requested name. Students should interact online politely, just as they would be expected to do in a physical environment. Sarcasm rudeness, and writing in all capital letters (shouting) should be avoided.

For more information, read the [Top 12 Be-Attitudes of Netiquette for Academicians](#).

About UND Professional Development for Educators Courses

You have up to four months to complete this course from the time of your enrollment. You may work at your own pace and complete lessons/exams on your own schedule, submitting up to 3 per week for grading.

After you finish your course, your final grade will be posted in Blackboard. Please **allow 3-5 business days for your final grade to appear** on your transcript in Campus Connection. You will receive a confirmation email from the Enroll Anytime staff once the final grade is officially posted on your transcript. You may then order an official transcript, if desired.

If you have an **administrative** question regarding course enrollment dates, extensions, withdrawals, questions regarding your transcript, or need exam assistance, please contact the **Office of Extended Learning** at und.courses@UND.edu or 701-777-0488.

Questions regarding **coursework** should be directed to the **instructor**.

For **technical support** including username and password help, assignment submission, or other technical assistance in the course, contact [University Information Technology](#).

Student Resources

Many services are available to online students such as writing assistance from the UND Writing Center. Visit the [Student Resources page](#) for more information. You can also access the resources webpage from the *Student Resources* link in your Blackboard course menu.

University of North Dakota Policies & Resources

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a serious matter, and any deviations from appropriate behavior will be dealt with strongly. At the discretion of the professor, situations of concern may be dealt with as a scholastic matter or a disciplinary matter.

As a scholastic matter, the professor has the discretion to determine appropriate penalties to the student's workload or grade, but the situation may be resolved without involving many individuals. An alternative is to treat the situation as a disciplinary matter, which can result in suspension from the University, or have lesser penalties. Be aware that I view this as a very serious matter, and will have little tolerance of or sympathy for questionable practices. A student who attempts to obtain credit for work that is not their own (whether that be on a paper, quiz, homework assignment, exam, etc.) will likely receive a failing grade for that item of work, and at the professor's discretion, may also receive a failing grade in the course. Read more in the [Code of Student Life](#).

Disability Support and Medical Services

If you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need accommodations in this course

because of a disability, please contact me. If you plan to request disability accommodations, you are expected to register with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office (180 McCannel Hall, 701.777.3425) or [you may register online](#).

If you have a temporary medical condition such as a broken arm or recovering after surgery, you may be able to arrange for courtesy services. In most cases, it is expected that you will make your own arrangements for these services. An example of a courtesy service includes access to a test scribe if the student has a broken hand. If you are unable to make your own arrangements, please contact [DSS](#) (701.777.3425). Unlike services and/or accommodations provided to eligible students with disabilities, the University is NOT obligated to provide courtesy services.

Resolution of Problems

Should a problem occur, you should speak to your instructor first. If the problem continues to be unresolved, go to the department chair, and next to the college Dean. Should the problem persist, you have the right to go to the Provost next, and then to the President.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

It is the policy of the University of North Dakota that no person shall be discriminated against because of race, religion, age, color, gender, disability, national origin, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, veteran's status, or political belief or affiliation and the equal opportunity and access to facilities shall be available to all. Concerns regarding Title IX, Title VI, Title VII, ADA, and Section 504 may be addressed to Donna Smith, Director of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action and Title IX Coordinator, 401 Twamley Hall, 701.777.4171, und.affirmativeactionoffice@UND.edu or the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Dept. of Education, 500 West Madison, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60611 or any other federal agency.

Reporting of Sexual Violence

If you or a friend has experienced sexual violence, such as sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence or stalking, or sex-based harassment, please contact UND's Title IX Coordinator, Donna Smith, for assistance: 701.777.4171; donna.smith@UND.edu; or visit the [UND Title IX site](#).

Faculty Reporting Obligations Regarding Sexual Violence

It is important for students to understand that faculty are required to share with UND's Title IX Coordinator any incidents of sexual violence they become aware of, even if those incidents occurred in the past or are disclosed as part of a class assignment. This does not mean an investigation will occur if the student does not want that, but it does allow UND to provide resources to help the student continue to be successful at UND. If you have been the victim of sexual violence, [learn more about confidential support services](#) at UND.

UND Cares Program

The [UND Cares program](#) seeks to educate faculty, staff and students on how to recognize warning signs that indicate a student is in distress.

How to Seek Help When in Distress

We know that while college is a wonderful time for most students, some students may struggle. You may experience students in distress on campus, in your classroom, in your home, and within residence halls. Distressed students may initially seek assistance from faculty, staff members, their parents, and other students. In addition to the support we can provide to each other, there are also professional support services available to students on campus through the Dean of Students and University Counseling Center. Both staffs are available to consult with you about getting help or providing a friend with the help that he or she may

need. Visit the [UND Cares program](#) webpage for more additional information.

How to Recognize When a Student is in Distress

The term “distressed” can mean any of the following:

- Student has significant changes in eating, sleeping, grooming, spending, or other daily activities.
- Student has cut off or minimized contact with family or friends.
- Student has significant changes in performance or involvement in academics, sports, extracurricular, or social activities.
- Student describes problems (missing class, not remembering, destructive behavior) that result from experiences with drinking or drugs.
- Student is acting withdrawn, volatile, tearful, etc.
- Student is acting out of character or differently than usual.
- Student is talking explicitly about hopelessness or suicide.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeate this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

Additional Resources

It is my goal to foster an environment of mutual respect in which everyone feels comfortable voicing their opinions, sharing their stories, and learning about potentially heavy or personally relevant material. If, at any point, you feel like the information covered in this class elicits thoughts, feelings, or concerns that you would like to discuss further, don't hesitate to reach out to me, or the [UND Counseling Center](#) (701-777-2127)

Further, if you experience extenuating circumstances, sexual violence, identity-based harm, or any other personal crisis during the semester, don't hesitate to reach out to me so we can provide academic assistance and help you in this course, and put you in contact with the appropriate resources and services (if needed).

- [UND Care Team](#): 701-777-2664 (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM M-F) or 701-777-3491 (evenings and weekends)
- [UND Campus Police](#): 701-777-3491·UND Student Health: 701-777-4500
- [UND Title IX Resources](#)
- [Abuse and Rape Crisis Hotline \(CVIC\)](#): 701-746-8900 (24 hours)
- [Grand Forks Police Department](#): 701-787-8000 (24 hours)
- [Emergency Room](#): 701-780-5280
- [UND Student Diversity and Inclusion](#): 701-777-6985
- [Food For Thought Pantry](#): (Wilkerson Commons Room 169; 701-777-4200)
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): (1-800-273-8255)