



## Increase Home-School Communication with Backpacks

EDU 56399

Nov. 14-Dec. 5, 2020

2 Credit Hours

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**Course Description:** Join us as investigate ways to improve and increase communication between home and school. Teachers of all grade levels will explore how to create fun and simple activities that can be included in thematic backpacks and sent home with students. The goal of these cross-curricular backpacks is to provide families with hands-on and engaging activities that complement the learning going on in the classroom and provide opportunities for families to spend time together.

**Course Role in the Program/Major:** This course is being offered as a Professional Development course for all grade levels K-12+



**Course Prerequisite:** No prerequisites for this course.

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

- Create plans for at least 3 home backpacks in different curricular areas
- Explore the use of children's literature as springboards to backpack activities
- Explore current research on how to effectively engage families in learning together

**Course Materials:**

Handouts provided by instructor for additional fee.

**Instructor Bio:**

Nancy Smith is a first-grade teacher with the Olathe District Schools and she has worked with teacher candidates and teacher professional development at OUKC for 25 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 received her National Board Certification in 2014. Outside of the classroom, she and her husband, Cliff, are busy raising five boys.

**Overview of the Course**

**Participation and Course Format**

During the 2 days of in-class meetings, students will be expected to fully participate in class discussions, group work, individual work, and all activities.

Students will also be expected to complete a course project after the 2 days of instruction. This project will be completed on own time and turned in following the class schedule.

**Competency Assessment**

1. Attendance/Participation	40 pts	20 pts. per day
2. Post Paper	10 pts	
3. Resource Bibliography	20 pts	
4. Parent Newsletter	20 pts.	
5. Backpack Lesson Plans	300 pts	100 pts. each plan
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>390 pts.</b>	

**Course Schedule At-A-Glance**

**Saturday and Sundays:**

Mornings: Class participation and learning

Afternoons: Individual computer work time



## Grading Scale:

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

## IMPORTANT POLICIES

**University Policies and Procedures:** Students are to review the Student Handbook for all policies and procedures. Student Handbooks can be found on the Ottawa University website ([www.ottwa.edu](http://www.ottwa.edu)) and on the flash drive you received at orientation.

**Late Assignments:** Due to the timeline of this course, late assignments ARE NOT accepted.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:** Academic Dishonesty will result in failure on a particular assignment or possible failure in the course. Dishonesty includes such actions as cheating on examinations or assignments, turning someone else's work in as if it were your own, and plagiarism. Plagiarism includes failing to adequately cite sources of information, using someone's ideas, information, and/or words as if they were your own, etc.

The Ottawa University Student Handbook states, "The penalty for plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will be failure in the course in which the academic dishonesty occurred."

**Instructional Variance:** Course content and schedule may vary from outline to meet the needs of a particular group of students. The instructor will explain the rationale for any variance as it occurs.

**Homework requirement information:** Homework for accelerated courses requires 4-8 hours of independent work each week (outside of class). Some students may conclude homework study in fewer hours and some students may require additional hours beyond this estimate. Careful consideration should be given to this estimate when planning your personal schedule for this course. Online students should also follow this expectation beyond the time he/she spends interacting within the online course.

**Information Literacy:** Ottawa University supports the information literacy of its faculty and students. Faculty and students will receive ongoing training in the use of academic resources

through its library personnel. Faculty members are advised to utilize the Myers' Library online databases for class preparation and student assignments. Students are encouraged to incorporate research materials from the Myers' Library online databases in fulfilling course assignments. Each database in the Myers' Library collection offers a tutorial for its use. Additionally, an online tutorial regarding research for all academic disciplines will be available.

**Special Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability that may affect your learning, please contact the campus ADA Coordinator, Denise Haushahn, [denise.haushahn@ottawa.edu](mailto:denise.haushahn@ottawa.edu) or 913/266-8805, immediately to evaluate your request and implement any special accommodations required. The following is the procedure for requesting accommodation:

1. Students must declare their disabilities and request related classroom accommodations by: (a) completing an Accommodations Request Form, and (b) submitting recent documentation of a disability.
2. Requests for accommodation, along with documentation, must be received for evaluation at least one to two weeks prior to implementation of accommodations (that is, 1-2 weeks prior to the term start).
3. Additional information is available in the "General Policies" section of the Student Handbook at [www.ottawa.edu](http://www.ottawa.edu) under "General Policies".

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**Kansas Education Systems Accreditation Framework:  
The Five R's Classification for this course is Relationships.**



## ASSIGNMENTS

### Post Paper (10 pts)

The Post-Paper is due by the ending of the course. It should be submitted on Blackboard and should be 1-2 paragraphs (double-spaced) in length. It should highlight new ideas that you learned and how these can be put into practice. It should also highlight and reference at least one website, one video, and one article that the student found that relates to teacher organization.

### Resources Bibliography (20 pts)

This list should be submitted on Blackboard by the ending of the course. The bibliography should include 10 website addresses that contain information about home-school communication and/or family involvement, what is found at each website and a couple of sentences about how this information can be used to increase your home-school communication and family involvement.

### Parent Newsletter (20 pts)

The Parent Newsletter should be submitted on Blackboard by the end of the course. This newsletter should serve as a 1 page introduction to your school-home backpack program. Please make this document inviting with clipart, borders, text boxes, etc.

Make sure you include:

Purpose/Goal of backpacks

Guidelines for care and return of materials

Timeline of how long the backpacks can be kept at home

General direction for use (ie: kids and adults doing activities together)

Are you expecting any written/video documentation of the use of the backpack?

Mention that most materials will be included in each backpack, but occasionally families might need to provide something. (ie: tape, crayons, etc.)



### Backpacks Lessons (300 pts for 3 lessons)

By the end of the course you should complete 3 separate (but submit as one document on Blackboard) backpack ideas that list everything you need in order to make three different backpacks that could be sent home with students. You should include things like:

- List all materials ( and photos of items would be great!) that would be included in the backpack. List the source and the cost of each item. Also include what kind of bag (maybe copy/paste a picture) and its source and cost. List the titles/authors of the books you are including.
- Include the directions that you would print up on a card and include in the backpack for parents.
  - list subject areas and standards/objectives covered
  - list all of the items that would be in the bag and which ones are consumable and which ones should be returned with the bag
  - how long should families keep the bag before returning?
- Are there any recording sheets that need to be completed? Photos or videos included from families when returning? A journal in each bag?
- What is the name of your backpack program? “Science Take-Home Bags”, “Backpacks and Books”, “BFF: Bags For Families”, etc.
- A resource sheet for you: How many bags are you hoping to create? What does your master yearly schedule look like? How are you funding the project? Where are you storing all of the bags? Ideas for future bags and wishlist items to be on the lookout for?
- Anything else you think would be helpful to getting your project started.

