



EDEC 1010.401: Learning with and from Young Children

Fall 2024

Instructor Information

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- Office Hours: By Appointment Only

This syllabus is a living document, so course readings may periodically be revised. Please do not print.

Course Description

An introduction to early childhood education and care as a field of study that centers on young children's play, experiences, and identities. This course focuses on observation to account for children's knowledge production within their everyday social practices. The course will engage students in material and intellectual inquiry that explores the relationships between children's experiences and their human and more-than-human (e.g., technology, the natural world, material objects, etc.) worlds.

Course Structure

This course is designed to denaturalize typical ways of seeing and understanding young children. Rather than considering yourself as a "teacher" in this course, we ask that you think of yourself as someone who has much to learn with and from young children.

The content of this course is divided into 15 weeks. Each module contains a sequenced collection of readings, information, discussion, and assignments designed to teach a specific aspect related to learning with and from young children. Discussion prompts and assignments are heavily dependent on course readings, videos, and other shared resources; therefore, it is crucial that you complete the readings, watch the assigned videos, and read any additional information before you post a response or complete an assignment.

Course Objectives

As we proceed through this course together, I expect you will be able to:

- Critically examine Western colonial discourses and categorizations of "appropriate/inappropriate" or "good/bad" in viewing children's learning and experiences;
- Hone a pedagogy of listening to become keen observers of children being and learning in the world;
- Conceptualize the role of learning spaces and environments in curriculum within early childhood and beyond;

- Engage in active inquiry with more-than-human worlds in order to gain perspective into learning as embodied, experiential, dialogical, and co-constructed;
- Develop a curriculum map that features provocations that allow children to inquire and build on previous knowledge.

How to Succeed in this Course

Communication practices: You can contact me through email and/or by attending office hours. During busy times, my inbox becomes full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow-up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

Academic success resources: UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and how to succeed at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

ADA accommodation statement: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter for faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and meet with each faculty member before implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA at (940) 565-4323.

Technical difficulties: If you have any technical issues submitting your assignments in Canvas, please do the following:

- Check that you are using a compatible browser, like Google Chrome.
- Contact the [Help Desk](#) for technology support.
- If the Help Desk cannot assist you with the submission issue, email your instructor your assignment along with a screenshot of your chat with them. This will show me that you completed it on time. Then, resubmit to Canvas once you can (occasionally, there are temporary glitches).

Our Learning Community

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. I also encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline

civility understanding (Code of Student Conduct) <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>). We are all learning together.

Materials You Need

All texts will be uploaded to Canvas, corresponding with each week. The instructor will provide supplemental readings using online links, electronic copies, and/or handouts.

Course Schedule

Below is a list of topics and assignments we will work on throughout the course.

**The readings and assignments on this calendar are subject to revision.*

Date	Inquiry Question	Readings	Assignment
PART I: DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING OUR IMAGE OF CHILDREN			
Week 1 Aug 19	Orienting towards children: What's so great about young children?	As we believe, what we teach Plank (2022)	Week 1 Presentation Due by 11:59 p.m. August 25
Week 2 Aug 26	What is your conception of a child?: Recognizing the child as constructed by adults	Malaguzzi (1994) Wurm (2005)	Assignment #1: Your Image of the Child Due by 11:59 p.m. September 1
Week 3 Sept 02	Play as fundamental to children's rights: What is the role of play in the lives and learning of children?	Jones (2003) Gray (2014)	Play Memory Assignment Due by 11:59 p.m. September 8
Week 4 Sept 09	Inquiry as fundamental to children's rights: What children gain by learning through inquiry	Dyasi (2007)	Due by 11:59 p.m. September 15
PART II: DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING SCHOOL			
Week 5 Sept 16	What is the aim of schooling?: Unpacking your schooling/learning experiences	Kohn (2006) Christakis (2016)	Due by 11:59 p.m. September 22
Week 6 Sept 23	Classroom as spaces for children: Reconstructing spaces for children in the image of the child	Kuh (2014) Curtis & Carter (2005)	Due by 11:59 p.m. September 29
Week 7 Sept 30	Environment as a third teacher: What else can school look and feel like?	Strong-Wilson & Ellis (2007) Kuh & Rivard (2014)	Due by 11:59 p.m. October 6

Week 8 Oct 7	Looking critically at schooling policies and practices: Why might schools need to be deconstructed and reconstructed?	Pica et al. (audio) Khon (2006)	Due by 11:59 p.m. October 13
Week 9 Oct 14	Teachers as facilitators of children's environments: Teachers' role in children's learning and inquiry	https://www.rootsandwing.sfc.com/blog/howtoplanreggio Plotinsky (2022) Bentley	Due by 11:59 p.m. October 20
PART III: DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING CURRICULUM			
Week 10 Oct 21	Inquiry-based learning: Moving into uncertainty	Pelo (2007) Wien (2008)	Due by 11:59 p.m. October 27
Week 11 Oct 28	Material inquiry through exploration of our common worlds: What are the affordances of loose parts and everyday materials?	Schaefer (2016) Massey (2017)	Due by 11:59 p.m. November 3
Week 12 Nov 04	Emergent curriculum 1: How can children's interests be curriculum?	Wien (2001) Seitz (2006)	Due by 11:59 p.m. November 10
Week 13 Nov 11	Emergent curriculum 2: Creating curriculum that honors children	Mikes & Duffy (2022) Halls & Wien (2013)	Due by 11:59 p.m. November 17
PART IV: REFLECTING ON OUR UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLING, & CURRICULUM			
Week 14 Nov 18	Toward creating a better environment for children: Thinking and doing school with children's interests and inquiries at the center	Young & Morgan (2015) Christakis (2016)	Due by 11:59 p.m. December 1
THANKSGIVING BREAK			
Week 16 Dec 02	Final reflection: What have we learned?	Bucher (2023)	Due by 11:59 p.m. December 8

Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class and describe that the calendar is subject to change, citing the Campus Closures Policy (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).

Course Evaluation

Assignments: You will have the following assignments during the course. More information will be provided closer to the deadlines, but these assignments include:

1. **Participation and Discussion (300 pts):** Participation is the key to success in this course. You should demonstrate active learning by participating in class activities and contributing to discussions.
2. **Your image of the child (100 pts):** You will apply the ideas we've been exploring in the first phase around a child/children. Through poem making, visual creations, and written reflection, you are going to reflect on the lenses you bring to "seeing" young children.
3. **Schooling process/practice analysis (200 pts):** You will apply the ideas we've been exploring in the second phase focused on deconstructing school policy/process. Choose a schooling process or practice to research and analyze, aiming to uncover aspects of these school practices and policies that you were previously unaware of.
4. **Spaces for children analysis (100 pts):** Using course texts, you'll view two classroom scenes and provide an analysis of the ways the spaces are designed for and with children in mind.
5. **Curricular mapping (200 pts):** You will apply the ideas we've been exploring in the third phase focused on the explorations into inquiry, provocations, and emergent curriculum honoring children's curiosities and interests. You will select a topic to craft a curriculum map and devise three open-ended, inquiry-based provocations.
6. **Show your vision (100 pts):** You will reflect on your understanding of children, schooling practices and environments, and curriculum. Demonstrate your vision by reflecting on your learning journey from this class.

Assignment	Points
Participation and Discussion	300
Your Image of the Child	100
Schooling process/practice analysis	200
Spaces for Children's Analysis	100
Curricular mapping	200
Show Your Vision	100
TOTAL:	1000

A = 895-1000 points (90%-100%)

B = 795-894 points (80%-89%)

C = 745-794 points (70%-79%)

D = 695-744 points (60%-69%)

F = <695 points (<59%)

Assignment Deadlines: All discussion responses, tasks, and assignments must be completed in APA style and turned in on time via Canvas. Deadlines are 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the date listed. All assignments must be completed in full before they are submitted. Grades will not be given for incomplete submissions.

Late Work: I understand that situations will arise occasionally causing you to need an extension on an assignment. If you are unable to turn in your assignment beyond the deadline, please make arrangements with me ahead of time (not on the due date). *If you turn assignments in*

late, I reserve the right to only provide a grade and zero to few comments. Without prior arrangements, ten points will be deducted for each day late beyond the due date. No assignments will be accepted after one week.

Looking at assignments ahead of time and redoing assignments: With a large class, I cannot look at your work ahead of time to make sure you are “on track” or allow assignments to be redone for a higher grade. I will provide you with examples for all of the assignments so be sure to use them as guides for your own. If you use them and the rubric, as well as edit your work for clarity, you should be okay!

Integrity: Students who submit work either not their own or without clear attribution to the original source, fabricate data or other information, engage in cheating, or misrepresentation of academic records will be subject to charges. Any infraction of this nature, whether it be a phrase or more, can result in a grade of a 0 (zero) for the assignment. Please also see the UNT policies below for more on this.

Attendance and Participation

Course Participation: Participation in this course requires you to actively engage with your professor and classmates through the completion of module readings and written assignments, shared discussion of what you've learned from them, and demonstrated understanding and application of the concepts presented via audio/video chats, PowerPoint presentations, and conversations. Since we do not meet face to face in this course it is imperative that you read and reply to the posts of classmates by the assigned dates. The effectiveness of class discussions depends on your timely and thoughtful contributions. You must post and respond to posts in order to receive full credit for course participation each week.

Technology: You may use your tablet or laptop during class. However, at the same time, I know that having your computer or tablet open can be challenging as it can be distracting when there is so much at your fingertips—but please try to refrain from distracting yourself and your peers.

Additional UNT Policies and Resources

[Student Academic Integrity](#) policy. Students who use other people’s work without citations will be violating UNT’s Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of guidelines for your academic success. An academic integrity violation could result in loss of points, a failing grade for the assignment or course, suspension or even expulsion depending on the severity. It’s not worth a chance, so do your own work and ask for an extension if you need more time on an assignment.

[Important Dates](#). It may be helpful to make note of important drop/add deadlines, etc.

[Student Support Services and Policies](#)

There are many resources available on this site that may be worth bookmarking.

Educator Preparation Standards

The UNT Educator Preparation Program curriculum includes alignment to standards identified by the Texas State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) for beginning educators. These standards are addressed throughout your preparation and assessed through the TExES

Certification exams required for your teaching certificate. Additionally, the Commissioner of TEA has adopted these rules pertaining to Texas teaching standards:

Texas Administrative Code Requirements for Teacher Certification

The [Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part 7, Subchapter 235](#) Educator Preparation Standards address the discipline that deals with the theory and practice of teaching to inform skill-based training and development. The standards inform proper teaching techniques, strategies, teacher actions, teacher judgements, and decisions by taking into consideration theories of learning, understandings of students and their needs, and the backgrounds and interests of individual students for candidates pursuing the EC-6 certification.

Instructional Planning and Delivery. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers demonstrate understanding of instructional planning and delivery by providing standards-based, data-driven, differentiated instruction that engages students and makes learning relevant for today's learners. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers must:

- 1) develop lessons that build coherently toward objectives based on course content, curriculum scope and sequence, and expected student outcomes;
- 2) effectively communicate goals, expectations, and objectives to help all students reach high levels of achievement;
- 3) connect students' prior understanding and real-world experiences to new content and contexts, maximizing learning opportunities;
- 4) plan instruction that is developmentally appropriate, is standards driven, and motivates students to learn;
- 5) use a range of instructional strategies, appropriate to the content area, to make subject matter accessible to all students;
- 6) differentiate instruction, aligning methods and techniques to diverse student needs, including acceleration, remediation, and implementation of individual education plans;
- 7) plan student groupings, including pairings and individualized and small-group instruction, to facilitate student learning;
- 8) integrate the use of oral, written, graphic, kinesthetic, and/or tactile methods to teach key concepts;
- 9) ensure that the learning environment features a high degree of student engagement by facilitating discussion and student-centered activities as well as leading direct instruction;
- 10) encourage all students to overcome obstacles and remain persistent in the face of challenges, providing them with support in achieving their goals;
- 11) set high expectations and create challenging learning experiences for students, encouraging them to apply disciplinary and cross-disciplinary knowledge to real-world problems;
- 12) provide opportunities for students to engage in individual and collaborative critical thinking and problem solving;
- 13) monitor and assess students' progress to ensure that their lessons meet students' needs;
- 14) provide immediate feedback to students in order to reinforce their learning and ensure that they understand key concepts; and
- 15) adjust content delivery in response to student progress through the use of developmentally appropriate strategies that maximize student engagement.

Knowledge of Student and Student Learning. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers work to ensure high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement

outcomes for all students, taking into consideration each student's educational and developmental backgrounds and focusing on each student's needs. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers must:

- 1) create a community of learners in an inclusive environment that views differences in learning and background as educational assets;
- 2) connect learning, content, and expectations to students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in meaningful contexts;
- 3) understand the unique qualities of students with exceptional needs, including disabilities and giftedness, and know how to effectively address these needs through instructional strategies and resources;
- 4) understand the role of language and culture in learning and know how to modify their practice to support language acquisition so that language is comprehensible and instruction is fully accessible;
- 5) understand how learning occurs and how learners develop, construct meaning, and acquire knowledge and skills; and
- 6) identify readiness for learning and understand how development in one area may affect students' performance in other areas.

Content Knowledge and Expertise. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers exhibit an understanding of content, discipline, and related pedagogy as demonstrated through the quality of the design and execution of lessons and the ability to match objectives and activities to relevant state standards. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers must:

- 1) have expertise in how their content vertically and horizontally aligns with the grade-level/subject area continuum, leading to an integrated curriculum across grade levels and content areas;
- 2) identify gaps in students' knowledge of subject matter and communicate with their leaders and colleagues to ensure that these gaps are adequately addressed across grade levels and subject areas;
- 3) keep current with developments, new content, new approaches, and changing methods of instructional delivery within their discipline;
- 4) organize curriculum to facilitate student understanding of the subject matter;
- 5) understand, actively anticipate, and adapt instruction to address common misunderstandings and preconceptions;
- 6) promote literacy and the academic language within the discipline and make discipline-specific language accessible to all learners;
- 7) teach both the key content knowledge and the key skills of the discipline; and
- 8) make appropriate and authentic connections across disciplines, subjects, and students' real-world experiences.

Learning Environment. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers interact with students in respectful ways at all times, maintaining a physically and emotionally safe, supportive learning environment that is characterized by efficient and effective routines, clear expectations for student behavior, and organization that maximizes student learning. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers must:

- 1) embrace students' backgrounds and experiences as an asset in their learning;
- 2) maintain and facilitate respectful, supportive, positive, and productive interactions with and among students;

- 3) establish and sustain learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and respond to students' needs, strengths, and personal experiences;
- 4) create a physical classroom set-up that is flexible and accommodates the different learning needs of students;
- 5) implement behavior management systems to maintain an environment where all students can learn effectively;
- 6) maintain a culture that is based on high expectations for student performance and encourages students to be self-motivated, taking responsibility for their own learning;
- 7) maximize instructional time, including managing transitions;
- 8) manage and facilitate groupings in order to maximize student collaboration, participation, and achievement; and
- 9) communicate regularly, clearly, and appropriately with parents and families about student progress, providing detailed and constructive feedback and partnering with families in furthering their students' achievement goals.

Data-Driven Practices. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers use formal and informal methods to assess student growth aligned to instructional goals and course objectives and regularly review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure student progress and adjust instructional strategies and content delivery as needed. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers must:

- 1) gauge student progress and ensure mastery of content knowledge and skills by providing assessments aligned to instructional objectives and outcomes that are accurate measures of student learning;
- 2) analyze and review data in a timely, thorough, accurate, and appropriate manner, both individually and with colleagues, to monitor student learning; and
- 3) design instruction, change strategies, and differentiate their teaching practices to improve student learning based on assessment outcomes.

Professional Practices and Responsibilities. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development, collaborate with other educational professionals, communicate regularly with stakeholders, maintain professional relationships, comply with all campus and school district policies, and conduct themselves ethically and with integrity. Early Childhood-Grade 6 classroom teachers must:

- 1) reflect on their own strengths and professional learning needs, using this information to develop action plans for improvement;
- 2) seek out feedback from supervisor, coaches, and peers and take advantage of opportunities for job-embedded professional development;
- 3) adhere to the educators' code of ethics in §247.2 of this title (relating to Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators), including following policies and procedures at their specific school placement(s);
- 4) communicate consistently, clearly, and respectfully with all members of the campus community, administrators, and staff; and
- 5) serve as advocates for their students, focusing attention on students' needs and concerns and maintaining thorough and accurate student records.