Course Number and Title

EDRE 3350 – 501 Early Language and Literacy Development

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Jessi Murdter-Atkinson, Ph.D. (she/her/hers)
Please call me:	Dr. Murdter-Atkinson
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Email:	jessica.murdter-atkinson@unt.edu
Office hours:	Tuesdays 12:00 - 2:00 at UNT Frisco (please let me know to expect you)

Course Description, Structure, and Objectives

Our class will meet in person on Tuesday afternoons from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. We will meet at FRLD, room 280.

This course focuses on theoretical and practical applications of early language and literacy development (birth through grade K). With an emphasis on family and community literacy practices, this course will explore the ways in which children use and play with language as their earliest form of literacy and how teachers can capitalize on family and community literacy practices to create humanizing classrooms. This course meets state expectations and standards for preparing teacher candidates to successfully take the STR and EC-6 Core (ELA) certification exams.

Dewitz, P., Graves, M. F., Graves, B. B., & Juel, C. (2020). *Teaching reading in the 21st century: Motivating all learners* **(6th ed.). Pearson.**
- There are several editions of this book and several purchasing options. An eBook version costs about half the print version. If you have any questions, please ask me! We will begin using the text in the second week of class.

Leu, D.J., & Kinzer, C.K. (2017). *Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, and Word Analysis for Teachers*. **(10th Ed.). Pearson.**
- We will begin using this self-paced phonics book in Week 3, so please bring a copy to class by January 27, 2026. Digital copies are fine!

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course meets weekly, in person, for approximately three hours. We will examine reading development theories and instruction and literacy teaching practices and assessments throughout this course. We will look at these domains by understanding why we teach in specific ways (i.e., our beliefs and theories), what we teach (the content we offer to students), and how we teach (i.e., the processes and structures we utilize). The concepts learned in this course will be extended and enriched in EDRE 4850. This course also focuses on developing reading abilities, motivations, skills, and strategies.

We begin by comparing and contrasting traditional views of reading and learning to read with current theories of reading acquisition and reading processes. Through the five pillars of effective reading instruction: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension, we will discuss issues of development, difference, and disability related to learning to read. A heavy emphasis will be placed on developing skills and strategies surrounding using tools for assessing reading and how these assessments can inform effective teaching. Assessment strategies will be presented and demonstrated in class, and you will apply these strategies in your thinking and work with students.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & SUPPORT

In this class, students will need internet access to reference content and course assignments on Canvas. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. For additional tech support, please reach out to the UNT Student Help Desk:

UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu
Phone: 940-565-2324

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, preservice teachers will:

- Study general principles and theories of teaching reading in the elementary grades
- Identify factors related to the acquisition and development of literacy and language
- Demonstrate understanding of concepts related to word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension, study skills, and critical reading as developed in elementary school reading programs and content areas
- Acquire methods and techniques for teaching reading to diverse learners across a variety of populations
- Select and critique instructional materials and plan reading instruction appropriate for linguistically and academically diverse elementary-grade level children using a variety of teaching materials and methods
- Acquire knowledge of formal and informal literacy assessment techniques and learn to use and apply various literacy assessments to inform instructional practice
- Synthesize and critique research in reading and apply information to current instructional practice

See additional Texas Educator Standards at the end of this syllabus.

F-1 VISA INFORMATION

Federal regulations state that students may apply only three fully online semester credit hours (SCH) to the hours required for full-time status for F-1 Visa (PDF) holders. Full-time status for F-1 Visa students is 12 hours for undergraduates and 9 hours for graduate students.

How to Succeed in this Course

> We care about your success in this course and beyond. Please read the following section to learn more about how you can succeed in this course. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

COMMUNICATION

Communication: Communication is really important! Connect with me via email, Canvas, or during office hours. I may not be able to respond immediately during busy periods, but if you do not hear from me within 24 hours, please follow up. A gentle nudge is always appreciated! If the situation is urgent, please let me know. **For example, if you are unable to attend class due to illness or injury, please email me. It is important to me to ensure that you are safe and that I can provide any missed class materials. I** promise you there is no situation we can't work through together as long as you let me know what is happening.

I will be available for office hours on Tuesdays from 12:00 - 2:00 PM. If this time does not fit your schedule (e.g., due to other classes or field placement hours), please email me, and we will find a time that works for you. Office hours provide an opportunity to seek clarification or receive support with course materials and assignments. Your success is my goal!

ACADEMIC SUCCESS RESOURCES

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment, so you can learn and grow. As faculty members, we are committed to supporting your success as a student. To learn more about campus resources and how to succeed at UNT, visit 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 ACCOMMODATIONS
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first 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 to be delivered to the 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. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to 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 website (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access). You may also contact ODA at (940) 565-4323.

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

We share a commitment to the value of an inclusive learning environment.

We value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with us 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 like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together (Code of Student Conduct) (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012).

Required/Recommended Materials

In this section, you will learn where to find the materials required for this course.

- Dewitz, P., Graves, M. F., Graves, B. B., & Juel, C. (2020). *Teaching reading in the 21st century: Motivating all learners* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Leu, D.J., & Kinzer, C.K. (2017). *Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, and Word Analysis for Teachers*. (10th Ed.). Pearson.
- Technology requirements:
  - This course has digital components. Students need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System to participate fully in this class. You will be informed of other technical needs to access course content if circumstances change. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at Learn Anywhere (https://online.unt.edu/learn).

Course Requirements/Schedule

In this section, you will see a rough draft of our learning experiences, course readings, and assignments.

This syllabus is a living document and is intended to be a guide. It may be modified at any time at the instructor's discretion, in response to the local context (e.g., inclement weather, COVID-19), and/or to enhance students' learning experiences.

Week/Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Week 1 January 13, 2026	Introduction to the Course and Each Other What is Literacy? What are our experiences with Literacy?		• Send Jessi a picture for name study!
Week 2 January 20, 2026	Theories and Model of Literacy	• TRTC Ch.1, p. 8-27 • TRTC Ch. 2, p. 46-50	• Send Jessi a picture for name study!
Week 3 January 27, 2026	Oral Language Development	• Owocki & Goodman Ch. 5 (on Canvas) • Souto-Manning and Martell Ch. 2 (on Canvas)	• Language & Literacy Autobiography • Self-paced phonics Ch. 1
Week 4 February 3, 2026	Alphabetic Knowledge, Phonological & Phonemic Awareness Development & Instruction	• TRTC Ch. 7, p. 187-210 • Yopp & Yopp (2000)	• Reading Response #1 • Self-paced phonics Ch. 2
Week 5 February 10, 2025	Phonological & Phonemic Awareness Assessment	• TRTC Ch. 7, p. 201-216 • Piasta & Hudson (2022)	• Phonics Quiz #1
Week 6 February 17, 2026	Phonics Development and Instruction	• TRTC Ch. 8, p. 218-229 • Ehri (2022)	• Self-paced phonics Ch. 3
Week 7 February 24, 2026	Phonics Assessment	• TRTC Ch. 8, p. 230-250	• Reading Response #2 • Self-paced phonics Ch. 4
Week 8 March 3, 2026	Fluency Instruction & Assessment	• TRTC Ch. 9 (ALL)	• Identify child for Case Study project • Phonics Quiz #2
Week 9 NO CLASSES (Spring Break)			

Week 10 March 17, 2026	Vocabulary Development & Instruction	• TRTC Ch. 10 (ALL)	• Self-paced phonics Ch. 5
Week 11 March 24, 2026	Comprehension	• TRTC Ch. 11 (ALL)	• Reading Response #3 • Self-paced phonics Ch. 6
Week 12 March 31, 2026	Comprehension	• TRTC Ch. 12 (ALL) • Giroir, Grimaldo, Vaughn, & Roberts (2015)	• Phonics Quiz #3 • Case Study Part 2
Week 13 April 7, 2026 *TBD - Jessi may be at AERA '26*	Science of Teaching Reading (STR) Exam structure, test-taking tips, and constructed response workshop		• Self-paced phonics Ch. 7
Week 14 April 14, 2026	Reading Differences and dis/ability	• TRTC Ch. 3, p. 88-107 • Rupley, Blaire, & Nichols (2009)	• Self-paced phonics Ch. 8 • Literacy Vision Part 1
Week 15 April 21, 2026	Multilingual learners Case Study Workshop	• TRTC Ch. 14 • Yoon (2019)	• Reading Response #4 • Phonics Quiz #4
Week 16 April 28, 2026	Putting it all together Presentations Celebration		• Attendance & Participation reflection • Literacy Vision Part 2 • Case Study Report (due 5/2/25)

*Details about assignments will be posted on Canvas.

Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class. The calendar is subject to change per the Emergency Notifications and Procedures Policy (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049).

Assessing Your Work

Brief descriptions of major assignments are provided below. **Please refer back to this throughout the semester.** A more detailed assignment sheet and evaluation rubric may be provided a few weeks before each assignment is

due. Please note that I prefer double-spaced, one-inch margins, and 12-point font for all assignments. *It makes it easier to read and provide feedback.*

COURSE EVALUATION

Attendance and Participation	15%
Reading Responses	20%
Language and Literacy autobiography	10%
Phonics Quizzes	20%
Case Study of an Elementary Student	20%
Literacy Vision	15%
Total Evaluation Points	**100%**

Attendance and Participation (15%)

This course is designed and organized to be highly collaborative and interactive. Our class time will involve small and whole group activities and discussions. Therefore, your attendance and participation are essential to everyone's learning in our course. Please see the section on Attendance and Participation for further details.

Due: Ongoing

Reading Responses (20%)

Each week, you will be assigned a course reading. Please take notes and/or annotate as you read and be prepared to co-construct learning as a community. You will compose a response four times this semester in response to the course readings. Your response might make connections between texts, raise questions or tensions, and push back on or pull out specific threads. It may also include connections to reading instruction that you are observing in your placements. Your reading responses are a space for you to synthesize your own reading, capturing what will be important for your current and future teaching. Your response should reflect how you draw meaning in preparation for our class discussions. I will assess/grade responses based on the depth of your engagement with the texts, the thoroughness of your meaning-making, and how you attend to the course's themes. Reading responses should be approximately 300-400 words in length.

Due: February 10, 2026; March 3, 2026; March 31, 2026; April 21, 2026

Language and Literacy Autobiography (10%)

What do you recall about your earliest reading and writing experiences? Interview parents, siblings, and friends about what this looked like for you. If you have artifacts to add to your project, that would be fantastic! As you entered formal schooling, how did you view yourself as a reader and writer? Did your early experiences in school position you with a deficit or appreciative lens? How? What does your literacy life look like now?

For this assignment, you will share your reading and writing life with us in a way that represents you. Choose 4-5 key events in your literacy life to highlight. You can be as creative and honest as you want! Some examples include:
- A brief video or podcast discussing your literacy life
- 2-page, double-spaced essay
- A slideshow with 10 slides
- Artwork, poetry, or song

Due: February 3, 2025

Phonics Quizzes (20%)

We will engage with the content of phonics (and beyond). This is a critical part of the Science of Teaching Reading certification exam you must pass as part of the certification process. Starting in Week 4, you will complete a chapter from *Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, and Word Analysis for Teachers* and take a related Canvas quiz. This will not be your only course experience that addresses this content. It will be a continuing focus throughout your EDRE 4850 course. **Please note that these quizzes are typically given on paper and only available to students who attend class in person, unless arranged otherwise beforehand.**

Due: Ongoing

Case Study of an Elementary Student (20%)

The purpose of this assignment is to learn about the stages of literacy and reading development through the eyes of a PK-3 student. You will need to plan to meet with the PK-3 student *one time* this semester. During your time with the student, you will select a literacy assessment to administer and then analyze the data. I will provide the assessments for you to choose from (e.g., Running Records, Spelling Inventories). From this analysis, you will design a literacy lesson plan to meet the needs of your student. More information will be provided on Canvas and suggested submission dates will be built into the course outline.

Final Report Due: May 1, 2026

Literacy Vision (15%)

Throughout the course and for your final assessment, you will reflect on your understanding of the five pillars and synthesize class discussions, research from course readings, and personal experience in classrooms to draft a vision for each pillar in your future classroom. The first part of this assignment consists of a group project (3-4 people) where you will collectively develop a vision statement, including a description of each pillar, a description of the instruction and assessment related to the pillar, and a visual representation of the pillar. Your group's literacy vision can be presented in any medium (e.g., slides, an essay, posters, dioramas, a video, etc.) and will be shared during the last week of class (must be under 10 minutes). Part Two of the assignment consists of a two-page (double-spaced, 12-point font) individual paper where you will reflect on how your vision of literacy has changed throughout the semester, how your identity informs your literacy vision, and what this vision means to you as a future classroom teacher.

Due:
  - **Part 1:** April 14, 2026
  - **Part 2:** April 28, 2026

COURSE GRADING SCALE

A	90% - 100%
B	80% - 89%
C	70% - 79%
D	60% - 69%
F	59% and below

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. ***Students who use other people's work (including AI) without citations will violate UNT's Academic Integrity Policy.*** Please read and follow this important set of guidelines for your academic success (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003). If you have questions about this or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

UNT Student Honor Code: *"I commit myself to honor, integrity, and responsibility as a student representing the University of North Texas community. I understand and pledge to uphold academic integrity as set forth by UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy, 06.003 (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003). I affirm that the work I submit will always be my own, and the support I provide and receive will always be honorable."*

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI): Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Therefore, any acts of plagiarism, use of AI technology to complete coursework, or the use of any other materials/ methods/means not one's own, is prohibited. In this course, I want you to engage deeply with the materials and develop your own critical thinking and writing skills. For this reason, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools such as Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini is not permitted. While these tools can be helpful in some contexts, they do not align with our goal of fostering the development of your independent thinking. Using GenAI to complete assignments, tests/quizzes, or coursework will be considered a violation of academic integrity, as it prevents the development of your own critical thinking and will be addressed according to the Student Academic Integrity policy.

VIDEO/AUDIO RECORDING: You are not permitted to record any part of a class lecture or discussion unless you have explicit accommodations through the Office of Disability Access (ODA). Creating and distributing a video or voice recording of lecture/discussion could result in disciplinary action.

LATE WORK

All assignments and postings are due on the day designated in the course agenda by 11:59 p.m. (for example, if an assignment is due on 9/8, it is due by 11:59 p.m. on 9/8). In the case of an emergency, if you need extra time before a due date, please discuss it with me, and together, we will decide on a timeline for completion. Please remember to honor this commitment.

ASSIGNMENT EXPECTATIONS

Please submit only Word or Google documents to Canvas (no PDFs). *Please do not email assignments unless an instructor asks for them via email.*

Attendance and Participation

To be successful in this course, you must attend class regularly and come prepared. If you find this challenging, please reach out to Dr. Murdter-Atkinson to develop a plan for moving forward.

YOU are an important member of our class community. Your attendance and participation are important to our work as future educators and our collective work in this class. I understand that certain absences are unforeseen, but your regular attendance and participation are essential to feeling successful in this course. It is very difficult to be enriched by discussions and collaborations if you are not physically present or prepared for class. University policy 06.039 will be followed for excessive attendance issues. If necessary, students may miss one class with a valid excuse (see university policy for excused absences) and not face penalties related to their grade (yet

students are encouraged to save this absence for illness or emergencies that may arise). <mark>Students must inform the instructor as soon as possible if they miss class</mark>. All assignments are due on dates indicated on the syllabus regardless of student absences unless discussed otherwise. A second absence will result in a loss of points from the total grade. In the event that a student misses <mark>four (4) or more classes</mark>, they will receive a failing grade. Chronic tardiness or early departure will result in lowering a final grade at the instructor's discretion (arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early).

In addition to your regular attendance, our class participation grade is based on active participation, including sharing your thoughts and questions as well as listening to the thoughts and questions of others. This is the expectation in every class. As we meet only once weekly, your class participation grade is based on these specific questions:

- Did my presence in class make the class better today?
- Did I actively engage with my peers in our community?
- Did I conduct myself in a way to ensure I learned?
- Did I help my colleagues learn?
- Did I take advantage of what was offered?

I greatly respect students balancing the demands of their coursework with their work, family responsibilities, etc. If you run into challenges that require you to fall behind in attending our class or completing the assignments, please contact me. There may be some flexibility we can offer to support your academic success.

CLASS VISITORS
Individuals fully eligible to enroll in the university may attend a class as an auditor with written permissions from the department chair and the dean of the college or school in which the course is taught. All persons must be officially registered for the course or have received permission to attend as an auditor

Certification Exam Preparation
240 TUTORING
This semester, you will receive access to 240 Tutoring, an online study platform designed to help you prepare for and pass your certification exams. You will receive an email to your UNT email address with a link to enroll and claim your access. Once you have activated your account, enroll in the **TExES CORE Subjects EC-6 (391): English Language Arts and Reading** study course.
How to Use the Course

1. Start with the Overview Video and Test-Taking Strategies.
2. Take the "Plan to Pass" practice test to identify your areas of strength and areas needing improvement.
3. The course will automatically highlight priority concepts based on your results.
4. Work through each content module, with particular attention to your priority areas.
5. Use the quizzes in each section to check your understanding.
   - If you do not pass a quiz, review the material again before moving on.
6. Use the flashcards to build and reinforce vocabulary and key terms.

Study Time & Practice Exam Requirement

- You must complete a minimum of **six clock hours** of study within the instructional content of the course.
- After completing your study time, take a **full-length practice exam**.
- Download a PDF copy of your score report and submit it to your instructor. If you score 80 or higher, also send the score report to the TExES Success Office at COE-TSO@unt.edu so it can be counted toward your official practice exam requirement.

Educator Standards

To recommend a candidate to the Texas Education Agency, the UNT Educator Preparation Program curriculum aligns with standards identified by the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC). These standards are assessed throughout your preparation and through the TExES Certification exams required for your teaching certificate. The Texas State Board for Educator Certification creates standards for beginning educators. These standards focus on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, the required statewide school curriculum. Additionally, the Commissioner of TEA has adopted rules pertaining to Texas teaching standards:

TEXAS TEACHING STANDARDS
Standards required for all Texas beginning teachers fall into the following 6 broad categories:
1. Standard 1--Instructional Planning and Delivery.
a. Standard 1Ai,ii,iv
b. Standard 1Bi,ii (Lesson design)
2. Standard 2--Knowledge of Students and Student Learning
3. Standard 3--Content Knowledge and Expertise
4. Standard 4--Learning Environment
5. Standard 5--Data-Driven Practice
6. Standard 6--Professional Practices and Responsibilities

A full description of the standards and competencies can be accessed using this link: Texas Teaching Standards Adopted in Chapter 149

EDUCATOR STANDARDS FOR EC-6 CORE SUBJECTS:
A full description of the standards and competencies can be accessed using this link:
https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/preparation-and-continuing-education/approved-educator-standards

English Language Arts and Reading Generalist EC–6 Standards
- Standard I. Oral Language
- Standard II. Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
- Standard III. Alphabetic Principle
- Standard IV. Literacy Development and Practice
- Standard V. Word Analysis and Decoding
- Standard VI. Reading Fluency
- Standard VII. Reading Comprehension
- Standard X. Assessment and Instruction of Developing Literacy
- Standard XI. Research and Inquiry Skills
- Standard XII. Viewing and Representing

TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
The following TEKS are addressed in this course. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills can be accessed on the Texas Education Agency website using the A-Z index at the following URL: https://tea.texas.gov/academics/curriculum-standards

- PreK Guidelines Domain III. Chapter 110 TEKS for English, Language Arts and Reading Subchapter A. Elementary Grades K-5 110.10-110.16 • Chapter 110 TEKS for English, Language Arts and Reading Subchapter B. Middle Grade 6 110.18]

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS (ELPS)
This course incorporates the ELPS in lesson planning and instructional delivery to improve English learners' language acquisition and content area knowledge. Teacher candidates will implement the ELPs during instruction of the subject area

for English learners. The ELPs can be accessed via the Texas Education Agency using the following link: http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074a.html#74.4.

TEXAS COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARDS

The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards can be accessed at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website using the following link:
http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=EADF962E-0E3E-DA80-BAAD2496062F3CD8

TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS

Technology Applications (All Beginning Teachers, PDF) The first seven standards of the Technology Applications EC-12 Standards are expected of **all** beginning teachers. They are incorporated into the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) test.

• Standard I 1.1k-1.3k, 1.10k-1.18k, 1.1s-1.6s, 1.10s-1.18s
• Standard II 2.1k-2.3k, 2.1s, 2.3s-2.8s
• Standard III 3.2k, 3.3k, 3.1s, 3.4s-3.8s, 3.10s, 3.13s, 3.15s
• Standard IV 4.1k-4.3k, 4.1s, 4.2s, 4.4s-4.7s, 4.11s, 4.12s]