



EDEC 1010.480: Learning with and from Young Children

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Instructor Information

Kyoung Jin Kim. Ph. D. [pronouns: she/her/hers]

- Email: kyoungjin.kim@unt.edu
- Phone: 940-565-2832
- Office: MAT 206-I

Course Description

This introductory course invites you into the dynamic, relational world of early childhood education and care, centering young children as capable, curious, relational, and meaning-making individuals. It is designed to examine and broaden the ways we see and understand young children. Instead of positioning yourself as a "teacher," you are invited to learn *with and from young children*.

The course focuses on children's play, experiences, knowledge-making, and identities, emphasizing keen observation and a pedagogy of listening as ways of knowing, rather than methods of evaluation. Students explore children's play, relationships, and knowledge-making across social, educational, and natural worlds. Through readings, multimedia, discussions, reflections, and inquiry, students examine how physical, social, cultural, material, natural, and ecological environments—including schools—shape, support, or constrain children's knowledge-making. The course highlights recognizing and honoring multiple and intersecting childhoods. Students learn how children engage collaboratively with human and more-than-human others and critically analyze dominant cultural narratives about childhood(s) and young children. Students develop skills to design learning provocations that nurture curiosity and creativity rooted in children's experiences.

Course Structure

This course is designed to expand and complicate the ways we see, understand, and engage with young children and their learning. 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.

Online Course Netiquette

Since most of the interactivity that takes place in an online course involves text-only discussion, you cannot always accurately "read" body language, facial expressions, vocal inflections, or the changing pace of what's being said. This presents a few challenges and opens up opportunities for classmates to misunderstand what one another is saying.

Course discussions are meant to be personal and will likely contain dialogue involving your belief systems regarding race, gender, sexuality, religion, and politics. Respond in a respectful non-critical tone regardless of whether you agree or disagree with another person's posting or comments. In some cases, discussion threads may make you feel awkward, uncomfortable, or

frustrated. When this happens, remain open-minded and remind yourself that others are entitled to have their own perspectives on the issues.

When posting, avoid using language that is angry, sarcastic, or meant as a joke. Without seeing your facial expression or hearing your tone of voice, your classmates might not realize you are joking. When in doubt, ask questions and clarify what the other person is trying to say. Think carefully about the content of your message before posting. If you are uncertain about posting something, it may be best to set it aside, spend some additional time thinking about it, and return to it later. Feel free to contact me privately if you are concerned about "inappropriate" content that's been added to a discussion or if you want to talk over your posting before adding it to the thread.

Be sure to read the entire discussion thread before responding. Make sure your question was not asked, discussed, or resolved previously. Keep your posts to the conversation relevant, brief, and straightforward. If you refer to something a classmate posted earlier, then quote a few lines from the initial text you are mentioning so that it will be clear what you are referring to when your response.

Course Objectives

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

- Recognize how children learn through play, their bodies, relationships, lived experiences, and more-than-human interactions (e.g., nature, technology, materials).
- Identify and describe children's diverse capabilities, inquiries, and meaning-making in play and everyday experiences.
- Examine how diverse cultural, social, and environmental contexts, as well as children's agency, shape multiple childhoods.
- Reflect on your own experiences, perspectives, identities, and positionalities in relation to children, families, and early learning.
- Practice a pedagogy of listening by observing children keenly, with openness and curiosity, seeking understanding rather than evaluation.
- Document children's play, relationships, and collaborative inquiries through active, close, and reflective observation.
- Analyze how physical, social, cultural, material, and ecological environments—including schools—shape, support, or inhibit children's learning and exploration.
- Critically question dominant cultural narratives (e.g., adult-centered or monocultural views) that define children's play and engagement as "appropriate/inappropriate" or "good/bad."
- Design learning provocations that spark children's curiosity and invite deeper thinking, creativity, and engagement.

F-1 Visa Regulations

Federal regulations state that students may apply only 3 fully-online semester credit hours (SCH) to the hours required for full-time status for F-1 Visa (DOC) 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

Communication practices: Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather 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 information on how you can be successful 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 accommodation 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 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](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone 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.
- Email your instructor your assignment along with a screenshot of your chat with the Help Desk if they are unable to assist you with the submission issue. This will show me that you did complete it on time. Then, resubmit to Canvas once you are able (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 like 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)) <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. Supplemental readings provided by the instructor using online links, electronic copies, and/or handouts.

Course Schedule

Below is a list of topics and assignments we will be working on together throughout the course.

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

Date	Inquiry Question	Readings/ Videos	Assignment
Module 1	Orientation towards children: What is your conception of a child?	Chenfield (2002)	Due: Dec 17
Module 2	Reconstructing our images of children: Discourses and imagery of children and childhood	Grady (2024) Malaguzzi (1994)	Due: Dec 19
Module 3	Play as fundamental to children's rights and ways of being: What role does play have in children's lives and learning?	Jones (2003) Nyota & Mapara (2008)	Due: Dec 21
Module 4	Play and inquiry: How does play invite inquiry?	Bentley (2012) Miller et al., (2013)	Due: Dec 23
Winter Break (University will be closed: Dec. 24-26 & Dec. 29~Jan. 2)			
Module 5	The aim of schooling? Why might schools need to be deconstructed and reconstructed?	Campbell	Due: Dec 28
Module 6	Rethinking children's spaces: How can environments honor and support play and inquiry?	Kuh (2014)	Due: Jan 5
Module 7	Learning invitations: Provocations	Caldwell (2015) Iheukwumere (2024)	Due: Jan 8

Each module assignment will be 100 points. In each module, you will have 1 or 2 small tasks to complete by the due date. The total points would be 700 points.

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

A = 630-700 points (90%-100%)
B = 560-629 points (80%-89%)
C = 490-559 points (70%-79%)
D = 420-489 points (60%-69%)
F = <4199 points (<60%)

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

Attendance: 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.

Technology: You may use your tablet or laptop during class. However, at the sametime, 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.