



EDEC 3750.501  
Young Children in Schools, Families, and Communities  
2025 Fall

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Course Meets: Tuesday 2:00-4:50 p.m., Frisco Landing 380  
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Note on email: \*\*When you email, include EDEC 3750 in the subject line.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Focuses on children's relationships with their peers, adults, and environments using dynamic ecological frameworks that account for children's local and global contexts. Through case studies, we will explore the ways that children's sociocultural identities and funds of knowledge play a role in the negotiations of their social environments.

Prerequisite: EDEC 3613.

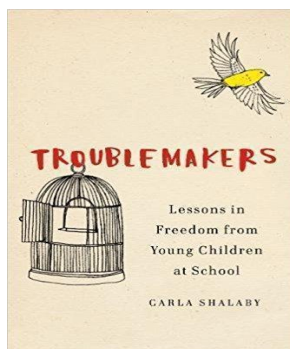
OVERVIEW & BIG IDEAS

This course examines the involvement of families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and discusses different models of involvement that are present in early childhood programs. Changes in demographics and family structure will be presented. Student and family populations representing cultural, linguistic, and general diversity will be addressed. Strategies will be explored for understanding, respecting, and working with all families in all communities.

Ways to establish collaborative relationships with parents and others involved with children in early childhood settings are discussed. Strategies for communicating with parents and guardians about their children and incorporating the families' goals and desires for their children into the early childhood programs will be included.

Our collective inquiry will be guided by the primary text for this course (Shalaby's [2017] *Troublemakers*) and the questions: *How can we work with them? How do we, as educators, design curriculum and our learning environments in light of this? By reading this text, we will focus on the role of teachers in children's development and explore the ways that classrooms can be spaces for belonging, that nurture children's competence, as opposed to spaces that produce "troublemakers".*

REQUIRED TEXT



Shalaby, C. (2017). *Troublemakers: Lessons in freedom from young children at school*. New York, NY: The New Press is available in the bookstore, online retailers, and as an e-book via Willis Library, using the link <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b6074460~S12>

Other texts will be uploaded to Canvas, corresponding with each module. Access Canvas via your my.unt.edu account or <https://unt.instructure.com/>

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Seek and maintain collaborative relationships with parents, guardians, families, community agencies, and other professionals to meet the needs of each child.
2. Create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for families and community members.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of and respect for variations across cultures, in terms of family strengths, expectations, values and childrearing practices.
4. Demonstrate the ability to incorporate the families' desires/goals for their children into classroom and/or intervention strategies.
5. Involve families and community members in contributing to the learning environment.

### COURSE STRUCTURE

- The course will be interactive and will include a mix of interactive lectures, small/large group discussions, and group led activities. Your attendance, as well as your active participation, are important to the success of the class. All readings should be done before class, and you should come prepared to each class with notes, ideas, and questions to pose to your classmates. As an instructor, I understand that there are multiple ways of participating in class, and therefore, I have designed the course to honor the multiple modes we use to engage with course content. That is, while I would not force you to speak up in a large group, I do expect that you engage in small group discussions. Our class meetings are a space for us to be a community and support one another.

### COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

You will have the following assignments during the course. More information will be provided closer to the deadlines. The following provides for you an overview:

- **Attendance and Participation:** Your attendance and participation in class is the key to success in this course. In addition to attending class, you should also be an active learner in class, participating in class activities, and contributing to small and large group discussions.
- **Weekly Reading Notes/ Reflections:** Engaging with the readings and multimedia texts assigned each week prior to class is essential as they are our foundation for our work and discussions in class. Each week you will submit notes/reflections on the readings. We will discuss in class what are some possible formats (e.g., sketch notes, audio/video recordings of notes).
- **Connect the Dots:** A group of students is going to lead a 15-minute activity that ties into the topic or readings for the week. The activity can take various forms, including but not limited to a game, discussion questions, or any creative exercise that reflects or illustrates the ideas from the assigned reading. Be creative! On your assigned date, you need to submit the materials prior to the presentation. You don't need to submit the weekly reading reflection on the day you do this assignment. I'll waive it for you. All members must contribute equally.

- **Teacher/family Interview:** You'll be asked to conduct a short interview with teacher teacher and/or parent/guardian. You will have opportunities to learn about their priorities in facilitating home, school, community partnerships. After the interview, you will write a 3-4 pages reflection paper about what you learned, what surprised you, how the interviews help you grow as a professional, and how you would build a strong family and school partnership differently.
- **Family Engagement Project:** With your group member(s), you will create a series of family engagement projects and home-school connection activities. This is a collaborative project creating a plan that is inclusive and considers the multiple forms of family demographics we have considered during the course. For this collaborative assignment, you are going to practice how to collaborate with each other in terms of how you will work together, what roles you need people to carry out to complete the project plan, and how you will ensure equitable practice (Group project).
- **Community Resource Exploration Project:** You will work with a partner to search community organizations or resources from surrounding/neighborhood areas. You will choose your target family to achieve the purpose of this assignment; which is to help you brainstorm their needs, identify many of the available resources for your target families, and create a brochure for them to use.
- **Letter to Yourself:** You will write a reflection in the form of a letter to yourself. In your letter, include three takeaways that you are walking away with from this course. In each takeaway, please include 1) describe the takeaway idea, 2) explain why this is important for you as a teacher, and 3) make a connection to course materials (readings, presentations, etc.)

## COURSE EVALUATION

Attendance and Participation (150 pts)  
 Weekly reading note (150 pts)  
 Connect the dots (50 pts)  
 Teacher/family interview (100 pts)  
 Family Engagement Project (100 pts)  
 Community Resource Project (100 pts)  
 Letter to Yourself (50 pts)

## COURSE GRADING SCALE

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 = <419 points (<59%)

## NOTES ON GRADE

In this course, I want you to stay focused on the formulation of critical ideas and pushing your thinking around children and schooling. If I see that you are putting forth effort in this course to further your thinking of what learning is and can be, then you will be absolutely fine in this course. Not completing assignments is one of the primary reasons for making less than A would include:

1. Not completing and/or turning in assignments;
2. Having deficit views of children, families, and communities.

## COURSE CALENDAR

\*The instructor reserves the right to change the course calendar, readings, and assignments to meet the needs of the class.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment
08/19	Course introduction & orientation Home, school, and community influences on children's lives	Shalaby (2020)	Weekly Reading Notes (In class)
08/26	Understanding children within social ecological models	Ramsey (2015, pp. 15-21); Claire (2022)	Weekly Reading Notes
09/02	Understanding family dynamics	King & Haugen (2013)	Weekly Reading Notes Connect the dots
09/09	Connecting families through funds of knowledge	Mcwayne et al (2020)	Weekly Reading Notes Connect the dots
09/16	Reimagining family engagement	Steen (2022); Reimage family	Weekly Reading Notes Connect the dots
09/23	Creating effective partnerships	Kye (2022)	Weekly Reading Notes Connect the dots
09/30	Purpose of school	Shalaby (2017): preface & introduction Chase the why (2015)	Weekly Reading Notes Connect the dots
10/07	Learning from Zora	Shalaby (2017): pp 1-39 Zora	Weekly Reading Notes Teacher/family interview
10/14	Learning from Lucas	Shalaby (2017): pp. 41-72 Lucas	Weekly Reading Notes
10/21	Learning from Marcus	Shalaby (2017): pp. 75-114 Marcus	Weekly Reading Notes
10/28	Learning from Sean	Shalaby (2017): pp. 115-149 Sean	Weekly Reading Notes Family Engagement Project
11/04	Reframing family, school, and community engagement	Shalaby (2017): pp. 151-187	Weekly Reading Notes
11/11	Classroom management as a curriculum care	Shalaby (2020)	Weekly Reading Notes
11/18	Working with diverse children and their well-being	McManus & Colegrove (2023) Shillingford (2021)	Weekly Reading Notes Community Resource Project
11/25	Thanksgiving Break		
12/02	Putting all together: Thinking differently about young children	Kang (2022)	Weekly Reading Notes
12/08			Letter to yourself

## COURSE POLICIES

**Canvas:** We will use Canvas as the platform for the course. It is your responsibility to check Canvas for the readings, which will be uploaded there unless it is the primary text. From time to time, I may make revisions, based on the needs of the class. Those revisions will be announced on Canvas, and the appropriate changes will be made to the module.

**Attendance and Participation:** This course is designed and organized to be highly collaborative and interactive. Our sessions will involve small and whole group activities and discussions. Therefore, your attendance and participation are essential to the learning of everyone in our 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 attendance problems. 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). Students must let the instructor know as soon as possible if they will be missing class. It is the students' responsibility to obtain all notes and handouts missed during their absence. All assignments are due on dates indicated on the syllabus regardless of student absences. A second absence will result in a loss of points from the total grade. In the event that a student misses **four or more classes**, they will receive a failing grade. Students who miss more than one hour of class will be considered absent from that class meeting. Chronic tardiness or early departure will result in the lowering of a final grade at the instructor's discretion (**arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early**). Please note: it is the student's responsibility to drop this course, if necessary.

**Assignments:** All written assignments must be completed on time. If you are unable to turn in your assignment on the specified due date, please make arrangements with me ahead of time (not the weekend the assignment is due). **Without prior arrangements, ten points will be deducted for each day late beyond the due date. No assignments will be accepted after one week.** If you are absent the day an assignment is due, make arrangements to submit by the due date to avoid late penalties. All written assignments must be completed in APA style (<http://www.apastyle.org/> or <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). You must submit assignments via Canvas. Please note that many submissions will go through Turnitin, a plagiarism checker, so make sure that your work is original.

Assignments have been intentionally assigned throughout the semester to align with the course readings and meetings. Like you, I have a full schedule that has been carefully arranged. These assignments have been assigned to time points that allow me to give you ample and timely feedback so please be respectful of this. If you turn in an assignment late, you will receive less feedback. In addition, turning assignments in after the due date can put undue pressure on you to compensate for the tardiness, and it can put me in the unnecessary, and time-consuming, position of "keeping tabs on you".

You should be proactive in looking ahead at assignments so that you can ask any clarifying questions well before it is due.

**Incompletes:** All assignments need to have been completed for a grade to be issued. Incompletes will not be granted, with the exception of a documented emergency.

**Technology in the Classroom:** 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.

*Academic Integrity and Academic Dishonesty:* Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with university policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. The policy and procedures are available at: Academic Integrity Policy (PDF) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>).

*A/:* 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 like 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 any part of an assignment will be considered a violation of academic integrity, as it prevents the development of your own skills, and will be addressed according to the Student Academic Integrity policy (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>).

### 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.