



## **EDEC 1010.001: Learning with and from Young Children**

**Spring 2025**

Department of Teacher Education and Administration

**Instructor:** Natacha Jones, Ph. D. She/her/hers

**Course Meets:** Wednesdays 09:00 -11:50, Matthews Hall 308

**Office:** Matthews Hall 206-F or via digital media

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 12- 3 p.m or by appointment

**E-mail** Natacha.jones@unt.edu (allow 24 hours for response)

### **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 one dimensional Western and colonial 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 narrow, adult-centered 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:* 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](https://unt.edu/success) and explore [unt.edu/wellness](https://unt.edu/wellness). To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to [scrappysays.unt.edu](https://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>). We are all learning together.

## Materials You Need

All texts and videos will be uploaded to Canvas by the instructor using online links and electronic copies.

## 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 revisions.*

Date	Inquiry Question	Readings	Assignment
PART I: DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING OUR IMAGE OF THE CHILD, PLAY, AND INQUIRY			
Week 1 Jan 15	Orienting towards children: What's so great about young children?	Chenfield (2002)	
Week 2 Jan 22	What is your conception of a child?: Recognizing the child as constructed by adults	Malaguzzi (1994)	Weekly Reflection
Week 3 Jan 29	Play as fundamental to children's rights: What is the role of play in the lives and learning of children?	Gray (2014) - video	Weekly Reflection
Week 4 Feb 5	Inquiry as fundamental to children's rights: What children gain by learning through inquiry	Bentley (2012)	Weekly Reflection
PART II: DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING SCHOOL			
Week 5 Feb 12	What is the aim of schooling?: Unpacking your schooling/learning experiences	Blinkoff et al. (2023)	Weekly Reflection <b>Assignment #1 due</b>
Week 6 Feb 19	Classroom as spaces for children: Reconstructing spaces for children in the image of the child	Ameley-Quaye, A. (2024)	Weekly Reflection
Week 7 Feb 26	Environment as a third teacher: What else can school look and feel like?	Kuh & Rivard (2014)	Weekly Reflection
Week 8 Mar 5	Looking critically at schooling policies and practices: Why might schools need to be deconstructed and reconstructed?	Pica et al. (audio)	Weekly Reflection <b>Assignment #2 due</b>
<b>SPRING BREAK No classes</b>			

Week 9 Mar 19	Teachers as facilitators of children's environments: Teachers' role in children's learning and inquiry	Ashiabi (2007)	Weekly Reflection
PART III: DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING CURRICULUM			
Week 10 Mar 26	Inquiry-based learning: Moving into uncertainty	Pelo (2016)	Weekly Reflection
Week 11 Apr 2	Material inquiry through exploration of our common worlds: What are the affordances of loose parts and everyday materials?	Schaefer (2016)	Weekly Reflection
Week 12 Apr 9	Emergent curriculum 1: How can children's interests be curriculum?	Jacobs (2008)	Weekly Reflection <b>Assignment #3 due</b>
Week 13 Apr 16	Emergent curriculum 2: Creating curriculum that honors children	Miles & Duffy (2022)	Weekly Reflection
PART IV: REFLECTING ON OUR UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHILDREN, SCHOOLING, & CURRICULUM			
Week 14 Apr 23	<b>Asynchronous Day</b> <b>NO In person class*</b>	Young & Morgan (2015)	Start on Assignment #4 with group
Week 15 Apr 30	Final reflection: What have we learned?	Bucher (2023)	
TBD			<b>Assignment #4 due</b>

### IMPORTANT DATES

01/15 – First day of Class  
 01/17 – Last Day to Add a Class or Swap Sections  
 01/25 – Last day to drop a Class without a W  
 01/26 – Drop with a Grade of W Begins  
 02/21 – Last day to change to pass/no pass grade option  
 03/10 - 03/16 – Spring Break  
 04/11 – Last day for a student to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W  
 04/23 – Asynchronous day -  
 04/30 – Last class meeting day

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

## Assignments and Grades

More information will be provided on each assignment a few weeks before the deadlines:

1. Attendance & Participation (140 pts): Your attendance and participation in class is the key to you getting the most out of this course and to your success in this course. In addition to attending class, participation includes being prepared for class, reading the article assigned. You should also be an active learner in class, participating in class activities, and contributing to small and large group discussions. Cognitive flexibility and respect for divergent perspectives are expected in this course. Engagement happens as students probe, and discuss the materials and topics of this course. Additional questions and moments of uncertainty may arise, which is entirely normal and acceptable. Students are expected to be self-reflective and to show thoughtful diplomacy with others.
2. Video Reading Reflections (120 points total): Each week, you will submit a video reflecting on your assigned readings and videos for that week. The reflection should be posted to Canvas no later than Wednesday at 8:59am (before the start of class). Your weekly posts should be approximately 90-seconds to 2-minutes long and synthesize the ideas the article or video assigned for that week. Always include as part of your reflection how your thinking about this week's readings/videos and course content has changed, deepened, clarified or challenged the way you think about young children. Videos should be recorded in the Canvas assignment for that week.
3. Opening Activity- Pair/Group Presentation (140 points): Students will prepare one 10-15 minute opening presentation that relates to the topic/readings we will be discussing that week. The activity can be and is not limited to a game, activity, project video clip, discussion questions, etc. reflecting/embodying the ideas in the assigned reading. Be creative! Students will sign-up for a session on the first day of class. On the week of your opening activity, a member of your group needs to send me a paragraph about what your group is going to do and how it is connected to that week's readings by Tuesday at noon. Each student will also complete a self and peer evaluation form.
4. Reflecting on Play experiences (150 pts). Through visual creations and written reflections, you will reflect on the lenses you bring to learning with and from young children and their play by reflecting on your own play experiences.
5. Schooling process/practice analysis (150 pts): You will apply the ideas we explore 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.
6. Observing young children and documenting their capabilities (150 pts):  
Using video footage of young children in early childhood spaces/classrooms, you will learn to take careful notes of the children's play, interactions, curiosities, and capabilities (what they can do). You will then write a "learning story" about a child observed then connect and reflect on your observations drawing on class readings, activities and discussions.
7. Curricular mapping (150 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.

Assignments	Points
Attendance & Participation	140
Weekly Reflections	120
Opening Activity	140
Reflecting on Play experiences	150
Schooling process/practice analysis	150
Observing and Documenting Children's Capabilities	150
Curricular mapping	150
TOTAL:	1000

A = 900-1,000 points (90%-100%)

B = 800-899 points (80%-89%)

C = 700-799 points (70%-79%)

D = 600-699 points (60%-69%)

F = <600 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 except for the weekly Video Reading Reflections due by 8:59am on Wednesdays. 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:* 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 (see table below). 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.

*Technology:* Some class activities and assignments will require a tablet or laptop during class. Outside of these times, refrain from using your electronic devices unless needed for accommodations. I know that having your phone, computer, or tablet open can be challenging as it can be distracting when there is so much at your fingertips—please try to refrain from distracting yourself and your peers. Using devices outside of class activity will result in a decrease or a zero on your engaged attendance grade for that day.

### **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.