

EDEC 1010.002: Learning with and from Young Children
Spring 2023
University of North Texas
Department of Teacher Education and Administration



Picture from Abundant Beginnings Forest School

Instructor: Ranita Cheruvu. [pronouns: she/her/hers]
Course Meets: Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:30-10:50, Gateway 142
Office: Matthews Hall 205D-
Office Hours: Thursdays 11:30-1:30pm or by appointment
E-mail: Ranita.Chervu@unt.edu (allow 24 hours for response)
Note on email: **When you email, include **course number** in the subject line.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

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.

OBJECTIVES

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

1. Disrupt Western colonial discourses and categorizations of "appropriate/inappropriate" or "good/bad" in viewing children's learning and experiences;
2. Hone a pedagogy of listening to become keen observers of children being and learning in the world;
3. Document children's experiences through simple acts of documentation that take up the language of learning with children;
4. Engage in active inquiry with more-than-human worlds in order to gain perspective into learning as embodied, experiential, dialogical, and co-constructed;
5. Develop a curriculum map that feature provocations that allow children to inquire and build on previous knowledges.

TEXTS

All texts will be uploaded to Canvas, corresponding with each week.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Further details will be provided about the assignments during the semester.

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

- **Attendance & Participation (400 pts):** Attendance at all class meetings is **required** and is **essential** to your success in this course. This class is highly interactive and learning occurs through participation in class discussions and activities that are impossible to be duplicated outside of class. It is very difficult to be enriched by discussions and collaborations if you are not physically present or prepared for class.

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.

Communication with the instructor is very important in this class. In the event that a student misses five or more classes, they will receive a failing grade. 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).

- **Artifact analysis (200 pts):** You'll choose a schooling process or practice to research and analyze. Artifact analysis will also be part of early childhood specialization courses

- **'Spaces for children' analysis (200 pts):** Using course texts, you'll view two classroom scenes and provide an analysis of the ways the spaces are designed for and with children in mind.
- **Curricular mapping (200 pts):** You'll provide a curriculum map that features several curricular provocations based on scenarios of children that you also document. These provocations should focus on **inquiry** (not direct instruction).

COURSE EVALUATION

Assignment	Points
Attendance & participation	400
Artifact analysis	200
<i>Spaces for children</i> analysis	200
Curricular mapping	200
TOTAL:	1000

COURSE GRADING SCALE

A = 900-1000 points (90%-100%)
 B = 800-899 points (80%-89%)
 C = 750-799 points (75%-79%)
 D = 700-749 points (70%-74%)
 F = <699 points (<70%)

ON GRADES

In this course, I want you to stay focused on the formulation of critical ideas and pushing your thinking around children and schooling. To do well in this course, you need to:

1. Complete and turn in assignments;
2. Unlearn any previously held ideas that learning is solely lecture-oriented or teacher-directed. *I am asking you to think about learning as happening within our experiences in the world;*
3. Rethink your role of being a teacher as being a facilitator of environments and as learning *alongside* children.

All of this is to say a few things:

1. It is your responsibility to keep track of your grades. Grades on Canvas may be inaccurate so to figure out your grade, total up your points and divide it by the total possible number of points.
2. If you want to dispute your grade on an assignment, wait 24 hours and then send me an email with a rationale as to why you believe your grade should be higher.

Note on late assignments: *All written assignments should be completed on time. I will accept all assignments up to 24 hours after the due date with no questions asked or explanations needed. I encourage you to use this grace period as needed, but at the same time to not plan*

around the grace period. If you are unable to turn in your assignment beyond the grace period, please make arrangements with me ahead of time (not on the due date/grace period). Without prior arrangements, five percentage points will be deducted for each day late beyond the due date. If you turn assignments in late, I reserve the right to only provide a grade and zero to few comments. Late assignments may be subject to grade reduction.

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.

CALENDAR

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

Date	Inquiry Question	Readings	Assignment
PART I: ORIENTING TOWARD CHILDREN			
Week 1 Jan 17/19	Orienting towards children: What’s so great about young children?	As we believe, what we teach	
Week 2 Jan 24/25	What is your conception of a child? Recognizing the child as constructed by adults	Christakis (2016) Gray (2016)	
Week 3 Jan 31/Feb 2	What is the role of play in the lives and learning of children? Children’s play as a fundamental right	Gray (2014) Christakis (2019)	
Week 4 Feb 7/9	How is play a higher order skill? Further examining play as a mode of inquiry	Jones (2003) Gillespie (2016)	
Week 5 Feb 14/16	How do children inquire and make sense of their social worlds? Children’s inquiries within their human and more than-human worlds	Arrow (2019) Dyasi	Artifact of schooling process due Feb 19
PART II: DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING SCHOOL			
Week 6 Feb 21/23	What is the purpose of school? Examining what classrooms aim to teach and what children actually learn	Kaplan (2019) Gray (2016)	
Week 7 Feb 28/Mar 2	Why might school need to be deconstructed and reconstructed?: Gaps between	Christakis (2016)	

	what we are supposed to learn and what we actually learn		
Week 8 Mar 7/9	What does the research say about children's environments? Reconstructing spaces for children in the image of the child	Kuh (2014) Armstrong (2020)	
Spring Break			
Week 9 Mar 21/23	What else can school look and feel like? Examining progressive approaches to early childhood education	Kuh & Rivard (2014)	
Week 10 Mar 28/30	Where and how can learning happen? Learning that feels like freedom, and "classrooms" that are outside of classrooms	Bentley (2012) Plotinsky (2022)	Spaces for Children Analysis due April 2
PART III: CURRICULUM THAT HONORS YOUNG CHILDREN			
Week 11 Apr 4/6	What are the affordances of loose parts and everyday materials? Material inquiry through exploration of our common worlds	Valasek (2022) Richards (2020)	
Week 12 Apr 11/13	What can curriculum for young children look like? Designing provocations that provoke thinking	Durand (2016)	
Week 13 Apr 18/20	What do I do while children play, inquire, and experience the world? Teachers as facilitators, observers, and documenters	Seitz (2006) Mikes & Duffy (2022)	
Week 14 Apr 25/27	How can children's interests be curriculum? Thinking and doing school with children's interests and inquiries at the center	Halls & Wien (2013) Valasek (2022)	
Week 15 May 2/4	How can school expand children's worldviews and meanings? Creating critical and intellectually rigorous curriculum	Khon (2021)	
Finals week: Curricular maps due May 9			
IMPORTANT DATES			
01/17 - First day of class			

01/31 -Last day to drop a course & receive a full refund
03/13 - 03/18 - Spring Break
04/07 - Last day to drop with a W
04/08 - First day to request incomplete (eligible if you are passing at the time of the request)
05/04 - Last class meeting day
05/12 - Last day of session
05/17 - Grades posted

NOTEWORTHY

Land and Labor Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge this university sits on unceded Indigenous land and pay our respects to the, "wichita, caddo, Kickapoo, Tawakoni, Waco and Keechi land", and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas, as UNT was built on this sacred ground. Land acknowledgements are a small step toward unlearning the stories and practices that erase Indigenous histories and the ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples today. As teacher educators, researchers, and scholars, we are often complicit in this harm, and it is imperative that we recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Native nations in our work.

We also want to honor Black bodies. Many parts of the United States were built by enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendants, and only within the past generation were Black people afforded full rights. Today, Black individuals and people of Color disproportionately work as service staff and essential workers across the country. This community is largely responsible for the maintenance of our daily lives, the food, food services, child care, health care, and many other basic necessities that make our lives easy.

University Mental Health Services: This is undoubtedly an incredibly difficult time for everyone, and for some students, current and ongoing events may be challenging your fortitude. Please know that UNT has resources to support students who may find it difficult to find joy at this time: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/>. You can also contact the center at 940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu. For mental health resources, please refer to the following website: <https://speakout.unt.edu/content/mental-health-resources>

Food/Housing Insecurity: The UNT Food Pantry is open for curbside deliveries. Please visit the website for more details: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>. A student with difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Dean of Students, Suite 409 at the University Union.

Title IX Services: Sexual discrimination, harassment, & assault: The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights violations. UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of resources to help support survivors, based on their needs: <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources>. Renee McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached via email at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648.

POLICIES

Attendance. Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

Incompletes: All assignments need to have been completed for a grade to be issued.

Assignments: Submit assignments via Canvas. *If you turn an assignment in late, you will receive zero to little feedback. I reserve the right to simply give a grade in the case of a late assignment.*

Technology. *Please put your cell phones/laptops away during class.* If you are on-call for work or home, please keep the ringer off and let the instructor know that you may need to leave the room to take a call. Computers are only allowed as needed for appropriate class assignments.

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.

Course Materials for Remote Instruction. Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a [webcam and microphone - faculty member to include what other basic equipment is needed] to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Additional required classroom materials for remote learning include: [list specific software, supplies, equipment or system requirements needed for the course]. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at <https://online.unt.edu/learn>

UNT'S STANDARD SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors

including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodation Statement. UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of 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 accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu. (UNT Policy 16.001)

Emergency Notification & Procedures. UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course.

Student Evaluation Administration Dates. Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Assault Prevention. UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648.

Acceptable Student Behavior. Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Educator Standards Addressed in this Course

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 Teaching Standards:

Standards required for all Texas beginning teachers fall into the following 6 broad categories:

Standard 1--Instructional Planning and Delivery. Standard 1Ai,ii,iv; 1Bi,ii (Lesson design)

Standard 2--Knowledge of Students and Student Learning

Standard 3--Content Knowledge and Expertise

Standard 4--Learning Environment

Standard 5--Data-Driven Practice

Standard 6--Professional Practices and Responsibilities

EC-12 Professional Pedagogy and Responsibilities (PPR) Standards

The beginning EC-12 teacher knows and understands:

- Competency 001: human developmental processes and applies this knowledge to plan instruction and ongoing assessment that motivate students and are responsive to their developmental characteristics and needs
- Competency 002: student diversity and knows how to plan learning experiences and design assessments that are responsive to differences among students and that promote all students' learning
- Competency 005: how to establish a classroom climate that fosters learning, equity and excellence and USES this knowledge to create a physical and emotional environment that is safe and productive
- Competence 007: principles and strategies for communicating effectively in varied teaching and learning contexts.

EC-12 Tech Apps Standards

The beginning EC-12 teacher knows and understands how to:

- Standard I. use and promote creative thinking and innovative processes to construct knowledge, generate new ideas, and create products
- Standard II. collaborate and communicate both locally and globally using digital tools and resources to reinforce and promote learning.
- Standard III. make informed decisions by applying critical-thinking and problem solving skills.

Department of Teacher Education and Administration

The Department of Teacher Education and Administration seeks to improve educational practice through the generation of knowledge and to prepare education professionals who serve all students in an effective, inclusive and equitable manner. Its focus is on the preparation of highly competent educators, researchers and administrators who employ current theory and research as they fill these important roles.

Mission. The Department of Teacher Education and Administration integrates theory, research, and practice to generate knowledge and to develop educational leaders who advance the potential of all learners.

Vision: We aspire to be internationally recognized for developing visionary educators who provide leadership, promote social justice, and effectively educate all learners.

UNT Teacher Education Program Commitments

While teaching has always been a relational and intellectual endeavor, we acknowledge that *teaching is also both an ethical and a political act*. We recognize that many of the practices and traditions in schools today perpetuate long-seated historical and social oppressions. These social inequities are structural *and* socially constructed along dimensions of intersecting identities, including, but not limited to, race, color, ethnicity, national origin and identity, dis/ability, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status, language, social class, age, and genetic orientation.

It is through our radical imaginations that we can create spaces for critical inquiry and engagement in schools at multiple levels: intellectual, ethical, physical, social, emotional, ecological, and aesthetic. We envision classrooms to be inclusive places that serve as complex and just ecosystems that allow for multiple identities, modes of expression, and ways of engagement to thrive together. We do this because we are committed to dismantling oppression. Teachers play an important role in this movement. Our teacher education program supports the development of core values related to:

- **Identity.** Preparing teachers who have agency and critically reflect on their lived experiences and identities as a way of informing their professional knowledge and humanizing pedagogies.
- **Inquiry.** Preparing teachers who value and inquire into the complex identities, as well as intellectual and transformational capacities, of children and youth.
- **Activism.** Preparing teachers who create curriculum that responds to children's and youth's inquiries and identities, as well as the sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions of the world outside of schools—in neighborhoods, communities, and society-at-large.
- **Community.** Preparing teachers who recognize and honor the unique sociocultural experiences and communities of children and youth with whom they work.

We commit to teaching and teacher preparation that takes a transformative stance toward school change. We believe—acting in solidarity with teachers, children, youth, school leaders, and communities—we can radically reimagine and reconstruct schools and, thus, our society.

Teacher Preparation at The University of North Texas: Core Commitments

Commitments- >	As Teachers	To Children and Youth	In our Practice	To Radically Imagine
Identity	We are individuals with cultural histories, knowledges, talents, and interests that we use as resources in our teaching.	We value and nurture the love, grace, humor, compassion, creativity, patience, joy, and peace young people bring into our teaching spaces.	We practice humanizing pedagogies that are asset-based, equitable, and appreciative of who we are and who we are becoming.	We imagine schools as spaces where teachers are encouraged and given space to be different in what they do with young people and their communities.
Inquiry	We are intellectuals with a deep understanding of academic content, curriculum development, and flexible pedagogies.	We value young people's knowledge, creativity, curiosity, aesthetics, imagination, and embodied ways of being as essential, educative and liberating	We practice curriculum as critical inquiry and research where children and youth are positioned as capable, knowledgeable and social agents for change.	We imagine a curriculum in schools that is shaped by societal goals and influenced daily by events unfolding in the world around us.
Advocacy & Activism	We are activists working against injustice for young people, teachers, and communities rooted in racism and other forms of discrimination.	We value and embody caring in all its forms – personal, social, cultural, linguistic, and ecological – as essential to growing a positive learning and living environment.	We practice activism in the curriculum by engaging children and youth in work that contributes to the creation of more just, more caring, and more peaceful world.	We imagine metaphors for schools as nurturing spaces for the whole individual rather than as efficient factories or businesses that produce products and profit.

Communities	We are members of multiple communities – connected in ways that make our successes intertwined.	We value inclusive learning communities that connect us within and outside of our classrooms.	We practice humility through our vulnerability; hope in the face of adversity; and resilience in response to our efforts that have fallen short.	We imagine schools as sustaining intersecting ways of being, knowing, and languaging.
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