



**University of Texas at San Antonio - UTSA**  
**College of Education and Human Development – COEHED**  
**Seminar in Early Childhood and Elementary Education**  
**ECE 6473/ Spring, 2008**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jenifer Thornton

**Office/ Office Hours:** MB 2.224 Before/ after class and by appointment as needed (458.7939)

**Email:** Please submit all communication through WebCT

**Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching – ILT**

**Mission**

The mission of the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching is to foster the intellectual and professional growth and integrity of students and faculty through critical reflection and dialogue, civic responsibility, and leadership.

**Goals**

*The Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching will create a context that nurtures interdisciplinary learners who:*

- acquire and demonstrate content and discipline knowledge
- demonstrate an awareness and acknowledgement of and engagement in research-based, reflective, culturally responsive practices
- are producers, disseminators, and critical consumers of research
- demonstrate an awareness and acknowledgment of and engagement in social justice and equitable practices
- articulate their professional philosophy and demonstrate a strong professional identity

**Course Description**

3 hours credit. Examination of issues in early childhood and elementary education, including an extensive study of research findings, publications of related professional organizations, and research methodology applied to early childhood and elementary programs.

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**Required Textbooks**

Spodek, B., & Saracho, O.N. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of research on the education of young children (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Mahwah, NJ.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Additional required reading material will be posted on WebCT or given out in class.

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**Overview of Course Requirements**

Grading criteria and specifications for each assignment will be given by the instructor.

1. Assignments must be turned in on or before the specified due date. To be considered timely, assignments are due at the beginning of class. Twenty percent of the total amount of points will be deducted from your assignment grade for each day it is late. If you are absent on the day an assignment is due, make arrangements to have your assignment delivered to class or placed in the instructor's box. **ASSIGNMENTS MAY NOT BE SUBMITTED VIA WEBCT.**

2. Assignments must be complete upon submission. No incomplete assignments will be accepted. The instructor will not review assignments prior to their submission.
3. Assignments should be neat and error free. Points will be deducted for excessive, extraneous mistakes related to spelling, grammar, formatting, etc.
4. Assignments should be prepared on a computer using appropriate word processing software in APA style. Facilities are available to students on campus for this purpose.

## **Assignments**

### **Research Papers:**

Select **ONE** of the three following topics:

**1) Research paper on a topic related to a specific aspect of curriculum within the field of early childhood or elementary education**

The goal of this writing assignment is to research a current curriculum issue in early childhood or elementary education. You should find at least four research articles about this topic and use these articles to write an 8-10 page paper in which you outline the issue and future implications.

**OR**

**2) Advocacy Plan**

The goal of this writing assignment is to develop an advocacy plan aimed at improving the quality of education for local early childhood or elementary students. Within your advocacy plan, you will need to include information on the following:

1. What will your advocacy plan focus on (the problem)? What issue is important to you? Include an introduction outlining the problem.
2. Identify the causes of the problem.
3. Identify your goals for advocacy. What changes you would like to see in response to the problem?
4. Identify the strategies you will use to assist you in achieving your goal.

You will need to include at least four substantial references to support your advocacy plan.

**OR**

**3) Limited Literature Review**

The goal of this writing assignment is to research a topic of interest in the field of early childhood and/or elementary education. You will explore relevant and current research in the field and compile an 8-10 page paper in which you summarize and synthesize the information you find. You need to include a minimum of five sources for this paper.

## **Journal Article Presentation**

Select and review one research-based article from a professional journal on early childhood and elementary education. The journal article publication date should not be earlier than 2000. Information will be given in class on locating relevant journals. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation that clearly disseminates the information contained in the article. Your PowerPoint should include the following:

1. Overview/ purpose of study
2. Research objectives
3. Methods
4. Findings
5. Significance/ implications of the study

In addition, include a graphic representation of the information contained in the article. Additional information will be provided in class. On the day of your presentation, submit a photocopy of the article in its entirety as well as a hard copy of your PowerPoint presentation.

### Choosing Sides Presentation

The goal of this assignment is to learn more about a controversial educational issue or policy and to develop an informed position on the subject. Your 10-15 minute presentation should give an overview of one divisive topic in the field of early childhood and/or elementary education (i.e. inclusion, play, standardized curriculum, charter schools, etc.) You should also include your position and ideas on the topic and include relevant resources to support your position. Resources may include (but are not limited to) newspaper articles, interviews, books, and journal articles. Your presentation should be interactive and provide opportunities for debate and discussion. A handout should be provided for your audience.

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### Student Evaluation

Evaluation of student performance in this course is based on a combination of assessments/outcome based options to determine student understanding of course objectives. The final grade in the course will be calculated in the following manner:

Attendance/ professionalism	10%			
Class participation / completion of weekly outside of class assignments	20%			
Research papers	30%			
Journal article presentation	20%			
Choosing sides presentation	20%			
A= 90-100	B= 80-89	C= 70-79	D= 60-69	F= below 59

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### Attendance and Professionalism

Attendance of scheduled classes is **mandatory** for the completion of this course. Activities designed for class participation cannot be replicated and may not be completed outside of allotted class time. Therefore, attendance is expected for each class session.

Attendance will be checked at the beginning of each class period. It is your responsibility to put your attendance card into the attendance folder. **In order to be considered present for the class, you must arrive on time and remain in class for the entire class period.**

Tardiness to class is unprofessional and disruptive. Excessive tardiness over the course of the semester will result in a deduction of professionalism points.

**Points will be deducted from your final grade for all absences after the first one.** Excused absences are absences that have been discussed with, and approved by, the instructor prior to the absence or any unplanned absence that is accompanied by documentation. **Excused absences**

**will result in a grade deduction of five points. Unexcused absences will result in a subsequent reduction of your final grade by one letter grade.**

You are expected to demonstrate professional conduct and wear professional attire during class (see Fitness to Teach policy document located in the Department website). Please refrain from engaging in individual conversations during lectures or class discussions. **ALL CELL PHONES AND BEEPERS MUST BE TURNED OFF DURING CLASS PERIODS UNLESS PRIOR PERMISSION HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE INSTRUCTOR. LAPTOPS ARE NOT NECESSARY AND, UNLESS PRIOR PERMISSION HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE INSTRUCTOR, ARE NOT PERMITTED IN CLASS.**

### **Policies and Procedures**

The instructor will follow all the policies and procedures, concerning students, as they are specified in the UTSA Faculty Handbook and the Fitness to Teach Policy document. Any incidence of scholastic dishonesty or other student discipline issues, will be managed as the Handbook specifies (Faculty Handbook, Section 2.37, pages IV-3li-vi).

No electronic recording of lectures or class sessions may be done without the prior permission of the instructor. No eating, drinking, or smoking is allowed in UTSA classrooms and laboratories. (Ad. Memorandum No. 54).

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (MS 2.03.18, telephone 458-4157(Voice), 458-4981 TTY, UTSA Downtown BV 1.302 458-2816) in order to receive support services. If you need accommodation for a disability, please make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible.

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### **Resources**

Teaching is something that is an integral and important part of my life. Teaching both preservice and inservice teachers allows me to not only do what I love, but also to collaborate with people who share my passion. My goals for this class are to validate what you already know, teach you something that perhaps you didn't, and be a resource and support for you throughout this class and in the future. Do not hesitate to ask for my help or advice if you need it. I will be glad to either meet with you during scheduled office hours or arrange alternate times to meet and discuss any issue or concern you may have.

***The Tomás Rivera Center:*** The TRC provides an array of services to assist student in achieving learning success. The TRC provides training and assistance in such areas as study skills, test-taking strategies, note taking skills, writing skills, etc. The Center also offers individual advising and tutoring for some courses. The TRC is located in the University Center 1.01.02 (far west end of the UC). You can reach them via the web ([www.utsa.edu/trcss](http://www.utsa.edu/trcss)) or by phone (458-4694).

