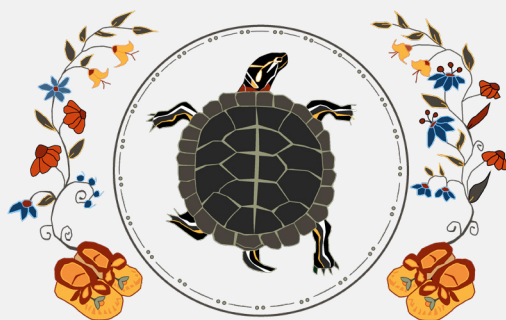


Being and Becoming an Early Learning Educator

Overview



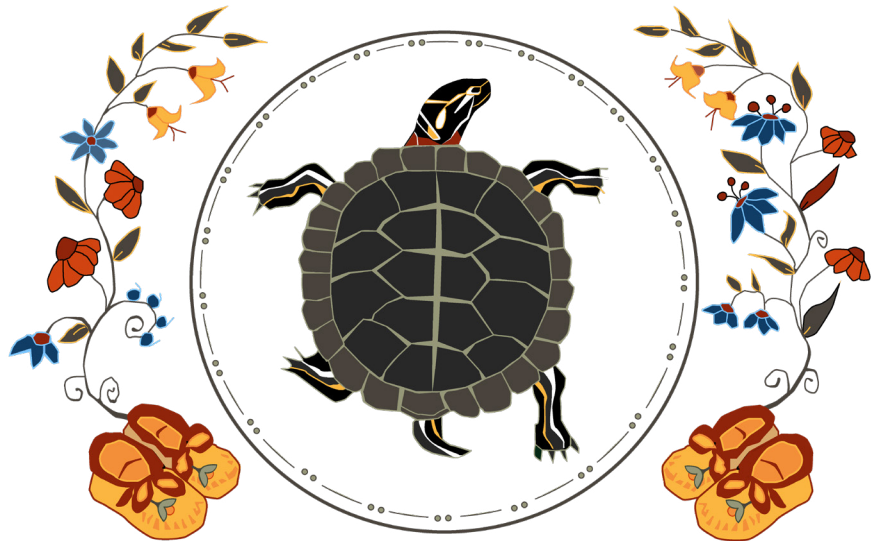
FDLTCC
CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
MISKWAADESI PROJECT

Boozhoo. Welcome.

We bring you these materials from our collective work as indigenous and settler educators, content experts, and learners, and from the families, classrooms, and land we inhabit and the histories we have lived as children, caregivers, and kin. We are ever grateful to the learners and educators we will see in the many videos that provide the foundation of these materials. Their work is a gift, and we honor and respect their vulnerability and presence that supports our continued learning. We are grateful for the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) faculty and learners sharing their knowledge and for partnering with us at University of Washington's EarlyEdU Alliance to realize the vision of these materials; learning activities reflective of Indigenous pedagogy and the research that undergirds our approach to competency-based educator development. This is a work in progress and will be transformed as you use the materials and we reflect on the lessons and stories they provide.

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College received a five-year Tribal College and University Head Start partnership grant from the Office of Head Start in 2020 that includes these five FDLTCC goals.

1. Promote scholarship and academic excellence through transfer and career education and provide access to higher education by offering developmental education.
2. Respectfully promote the language, culture, and history of the Anishinaabeg.
3. Provide programs which will celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and promote global understanding.
4. Promote a sense of personal respect and wellness.
5. Provide technological opportunities and experiences, preparing students for the future.



Original artwork by Alyxis Feltus

●● The project name is *Miskwaadesi*, the Ojibwe/Anishinaabeg word for the painted turtle. Turtles have significance to the Ojibwe tribes. The support of a turtle creates foundation for each of our steps. The lessons and gifts for every day and every moon that passes are carried protectively on the back of the turtle. The turtle may move slowly but each move is deliberate, intentional, and focused toward the future. A painted turtle will only eat its food while in the water, a testament to the importance of the environment to support the ability to engage. The turtle is a timekeeper, a teacher, and a knowledge and foundation holder. *Miskwaadesi* is another helper in aligning this project to the values of our communities. ●●

(FDLTCC, 2020)

In partnership with the team at EarlyEdU, we designed materials to give faculty tools to help learners become more reflective and skilled professional early childhood educators. The collaboratively developed materials work to reflect indigenous pedagogy that focuses on collective learning, educating, and well-being that does not separate who we are from where we are, our history, and all that surrounds us (Sarch & Whitesell, 2012).

Developing these materials collaboratively across indigenous and settler ways of understanding is an imperfect and ongoing process that we are committed to getting right to honor indigenous ways of knowing, center the sacredness of children, and bring light to the gifts and knowledge each learner brings with them. You will see words translated into Ojibwemowin/Anishinaabemowin where we felt it was appropriate and not simply appropriation. Many of the videos used were collected in American Indian and Alaska Native classrooms and all the design elements reflect a combination of Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and EarlyEdU aesthetics and meaning. Note that the original art work for the Miskwaadesi is done by Alyxis Feltus. We invite you to send any feedback or questions to info@earlyedualliance.org.

In addition to grounding the work in an understanding of the importance of community and culture in teaching and learning, we focused on the [Competency-based Educator Development Model](#) which uses video analysis, collaborative learning, and formative feedback as the primary pedagogical strategies to activate the Intentional Teaching Framework of Know-See-Do-Reflect-Improve. We highly recommend that instructors who plan to use these materials with learners and teachers first complete the 4–6-hour self-paced EarlyEdU Approach course available for free at [EarlyEdU Alliance](#).

As Dr. Bernadette Futrell, then director of the Office of Head Start, said in opening words to a meeting of the Tribal College and University Head Start partnership grantees in 2021, the aim of this work is to “sustain culture and community” and support learners and educators to “contribute to the wellness of the world.” Further, acknowledging the profound attempts by settlers to erase Indigenous lives, perspectives, and ways of knowing, she highlighted the Indigenous learners’ and educators’ “profound acts of courage to attend school and higher education in defiance of history.” It is our collective aim to provide flexible and responsive teaching and learning materials that reward that courage.





Learning Module Outcomes

The desired outcomes for use of the materials are more reflective and skilled learners and teachers, recognizing that we are both “learner and educator through the processes of continuous inquiry we engage in throughout our lives” (Ineese-Nash, 2021, p2.). We encourage you as instructors to ground your work in love and curiosity; love and curiosity of children, families, ourselves, our environments, learning, and teaching. Without this, our work becomes empty and disconnected.

	Reflections	Skills	Materials
We as learners wonder...	How does learning feel? What do I want to learn? How does the environment help or hinder my learning? How can I connect to others to strengthen my learning? What can I do to make it feel good and useful?	Collaborating Modifying environment Time management Planning and strategy Self-reflection	Courage to Learn journal series Basket 1: Reflect on own learning Basket 2: Play with changes to learn well and feel good Basket 3: Make a plan to feel your best about your learning
We as educators wonder...	What do I see? (In self and others) How am I biased? What don't I see? What can I do? How do I know I'm making a difference? What is my focus? How do I connect to others?	Video analysis Formative Feedback Collaborative learning Planning	Basket 1: Explore analyzing video, providing feedback, and working with peers, telling stories Basket 2: Focused practice to learn skills and processes Basket 3: Use skill to grow/deepen own practice

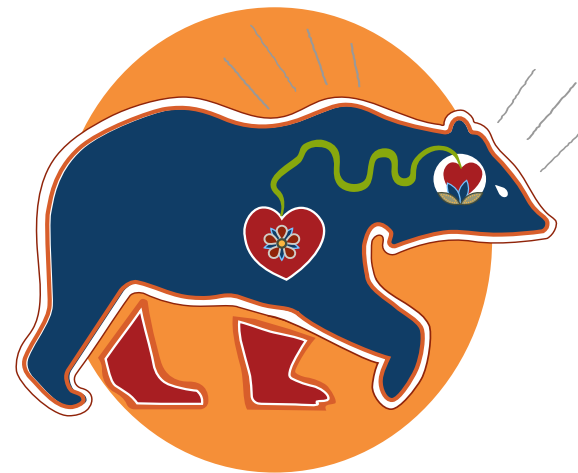
Structure of Materials

We have structured the course materials to offer the most flexibility in use depending on the skills and experience of your group of participants. All source materials are available for download in the Getting Started section on an unpublished Instructor Source Materials page in the LMS. This includes the standalone **Courage to Learn** pdf and an Instructor Guide, PowerPoint slide decks, Word and PDF handouts for each **Basket of Learning**. Also, we have included a section called **Media Library** which includes a collection of videos and still photos that are used throughout the materials and collected here to facilitate your sharing them with your students in various assignments. We invite you to use the ones we provide or replace them with videos that reflect you and your learners' specific places and ways of being with children. For a wholistic understanding of teaching and learning it is essential to incorporate pedagogy that is land-centered and place-specific (Ineese-Nash, 2021). If your group of learners includes educators working directly with children, we encourage you to have them collect their own videos to share and discuss together with compassionate inquiry. We cannot overstate the importance of providing educators with time, space, and others with whom to reflect upon their own teaching.

The online materials embedded in the LMS have been developed with the understanding that there will be plenty of opportunities for synchronous learning and teaching (in-person or online) knowing that much of this work's effectiveness relies on a live iterative process of feedback and reflection with others. Some of the activities can certainly be done asynchronously if there are expectations set about online interactions and the frequency and timing of posting to help facilitate the dialogue among learners. You can exercise your own discretion how you choose to present the online activities to your group of learners. We have included notes about delivery in the instructor guide for each Basket.

Courage to Learn

This is a journaling series based on adult learning principles which invites learners to reflect on and intentionally develop learning strategies that help them to work well and feel good about their learning and teaching. The journal includes 14 prompts that can be used alongside any course work to help strengthen and deepen participants' awareness of their current learning strategies and to develop new ones. We encourage you to have your learners discuss the prompts together even if assigned as individual tasks. Understanding how we can collectively support our learning helps all learners and is embedded deeply in Indigenous teaching and learning where in Ojibwemowin, knowledge, *gikendaasowin*, is always connected to what and who (Noori, 2013). We have added the journal activities to each basket that align with the sequence of the three baskets of learning; introduction and awareness, focused analysis, and planning.

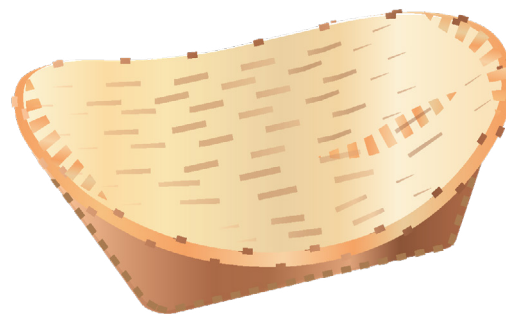


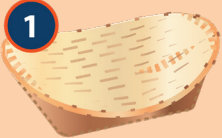
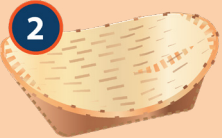
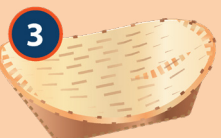
Getting Started

This section provides some guidance on establishing the important connections you and your learners will come to rely on as you learn and practice together. This section also includes several activities to establish belonging with your group of learners and offers the Video Playground to elicit interest in and establish relevance of teacher-child interactions, environments, teaching practices and child development.

Baskets of Learning

We have organized the materials into three Baskets of Learning. The baskets are provided in a specific sequence designed to build the analysis, planning, and collaborating skills essential for high-quality early childhood teaching. While it is not essential to do all the activities in each basket before moving onto the next, it is important that your participants are comfortable and familiar with the skills practiced in each before moving onto the next. You can determine what to offer to your group or learner/educators. Each basket also has its own particular scope and sequence. You can choose to move your participants through each one sequentially or use the discrete activities on their own to meet their specific needs. All activities can be completed in-person or online and can be used as in-class learning activities or assignments. More details on each basket are in the Basket Instructor Guides.



Basket 1 Exploring with Video 	Basket 2 Learning to See 	Basket 3 Honing our Practice 
5 Learning Activities exploring videos and telling stories	3 Learning Activities using the Visual Analysis Framework (VAF)	3 Learning Activities using the Intentional Teaching Framework (ITF)
Courage to Learn Reflections 1-4	Courage to Learn Reflections 5-8	Courage to Learn Reflections 9-14

Basket 1: Exploring with Video. This first basket includes six learning activities that introduce participants to the elements of video analysis. We offer initial video activities to support storytelling that illuminates the gifts, skills, and capabilities of the children and educators and create shared understandings (Peltier, 2021). These activities are designed to help elicit multiple perspectives, to practice perspective taking, and to center the work of children and teachers. They help familiarize participants with using video to identify and improve specific practices, to reflect on their own and with others, and to solicit and provide formative feedback. We recommend that the activities in this basket are used as in-class or online discussion activities and if graded are graded for participation. The object is to play and explore what we choose to focus on, what we see, how we interpret, what biases might be present, and what we might do differently. These are especially good activities to use with new teachers or learners who do not have direct or regular access to work with children. It helps establish the relevance of much of the theory and knowledge they may be gaining, and it gives instructors important windows into participants’ thinking. These activities are also a great way to introduce a new content focus through seeing it in action. This basket also includes reflection activities #1-4 from Courage to Learn focused on developing awareness about the learners’ current learning strategies.

Basket 2: Learning to See. This second basket introduces participants to the Video Analysis Framework (Packard, Brennan, Joseph, Emerson-Hoss, 2021); a framework designed to help develop teachers’ professional vision through “focused observation, identifying and disrupting bias, and accurately interpreting classroom interactions” (p 3). The objective of the learning in this basket is that participants will become familiar with the framework and be able to use it to improve practices, suggest alternatives, and provide formative feedback to their peers. This basket includes several mini lessons to help establish the focus for observation. We encourage you to use these and/or replace them with content knowledge specific to the teaching practices relevant for your population of learners and children. It is important as learners begin to develop their professional vision that it be connected to specific content knowledge. This basket includes reflection activities # 5-8 in Courage to Learn, focused on analyzing one’s own learning.

Basket 3: Honing Our Practice. This third basket introduces participants to the Intentional Teaching Framework (ITF), a conceptual framework that uses the authentic practice of working directly with children to enhance educator knowledge and dispositions while honing effective teaching skills. The most effective and sustained learning occurs within practice when learners are guided to integrate theory acquisition and their knowledge of skills into their ability to demonstrate them to promote children’s learning (Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, & Knoche, 2009; McDonald, Kazemi, & Kavanagh, 2013; Lampert, 2009). Our objectives for using the ITF in this basket is for participants to be able to structure their own learning. As in early childhood education, relationships are key to adult learning. This model emphasizes the value of getting to know learners early in the learning process and as much as possible involving them in designing their own learning experiences. This basket also includes Courage to Learn activities #9-14, focused on planning and implementing strategies to support learners’ own learning.

Considerations for Effective Instruction

We include here some of the guidelines and suggestions we have developed with faculty across the country to help ensure that our teaching respects and reflects the diversity in the field of early childhood, provides equitable access to learning and expressing what we know, and fosters environments where participants belong and are valued professionals. We encourage you as instructors to ground your work in love and curiosity—love and curiosity of children, families, ourselves, learning, and teaching.

Self-awareness and Reflection

Instructors can't lead learners where they haven't gone themselves. Part of engaging in anti-bias and anti-racist teaching practices is recognizing that everyone exists within a broader context of structural inequities in which implicit and explicit bias constantly shape how we navigate the world. We all hold multiple identities, are part of social groups, and have complex and intricate personal backgrounds worthy of dignity and respect. By committing to continuous improvement of your own self-awareness, you can take ongoing action to best support the people in your learning community.

Here are some questions you can reflect on to get started:

- What are my identities, and how do others/my participants perceive me?
- What are my implicit (or explicit) biases? Do I propagate, neutralize, or challenge stereotypes in my class? How do I know?
- Consider taking at least one [implicit bias test](#). When you're done, think about: Were the results what you expected? What surprised you about the results? What is one helpful next step to address your implicit bias?
- How can I be a bias interrupter?
- How do I handle challenges in the classroom?
- How might the ways I set up classroom spaces and activities foster inclusion or exclusion?



Facilitating Rather Than Lecturing

Participants bring their own funds of knowledge to each course. Funds of knowledge include:

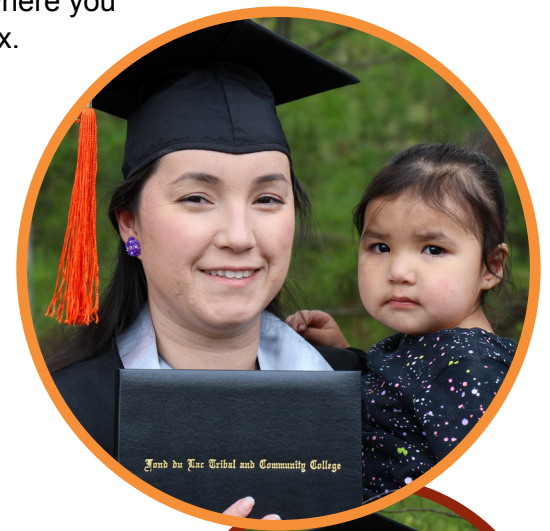
- Cultural and family knowledge and practices
- Academic and personal background knowledge
- Accumulated life experiences
- Skills and knowledge used to navigate everyday social contexts
- World views structured by broader historically and politically influenced social forces
- Ensure you are facilitating discussion so everyone (including yourself) can learn from one another, rather than seeing you as the sole expert. This also helps reduce a learner-educator power imbalance.

Fostering Belonging

As an instructor, you want your class to be a place of belonging for every learner so they can fully participate and learn the most from what the course has to offer. This is especially important for early childhood teachers who will create their own learning environments. But what does this mean? Belonging can mean something different to every person. It is something that the participant has to define; we may be able to say we have *included* everyone, but only the participant can determine if they feel like they belong. Centering their experience is crucial here. It's important to talk with the participants in your course about how you each define belonging. According to the [TIES Center](#), "Belonging is experienced when learners are present, invited, welcomed, known, accepted, involved, supported, heard, befriended, and needed." Each of these represents [10 dimensions of belonging](#). You might consider sharing this with participants in your course to start a discussion about belonging.

Here are other strategies to help foster belonging:

- Provide a low or no stakes discussion forum in your course where you pose questions that help everyone get to know each other (Ex. What are three songs that represent you and why?)
- Reach out to course participants before class begins, perhaps with a short, fun video introducing yourself
- Have a one-on-one video chat with each learner early in the course/program
- Distribute culture and climate surveys
- Encourage and allow learners to talk about their families, their values, and themselves beyond the classroom
- Invite seniors and/or alumni to co-facilitate class with you
- Provide participants with both mirrors (opportunities to see themselves) and windows (opportunities to see into the experience of someone else)
- Offer affinity Communities of Reflection and Practice (CORP) groups (linguistic, racial, first-generation college learner, etc.)
- For an online course, use surveys to discover participants' preferences for responding (e.g. early responders, late responders) to help build compatible groups.



Interrupting and Responding to Hurtful Comments

As the instructor of a course, you must disrupt hurtful comments. Keep in mind it may not be a participant's intent to say or do something hurtful and address the impact. In this way, you are modeling how participants can also disrupt hurtful comments. This is especially important when we view and discuss videos of others who we may not know. Viewing and discussing videos together can help raise different understandings and biases which we need to use as opportunities for growth and learning. Establishing norms and practicing with videos of others can help us practice the respectful, responsive, critical, and compassionate conversations we want to have when we share videos of our own practice.

Here are a few tips for responding to hurtful comments in-the-moment:

- Refer to and use the group norms established at the start of your learning together
- Pause and assess the situation
- Intervene and address the offense. Remember that this is a learning opportunity for everyone, especially if the comment reflects someone's implicit bias
- Acknowledge participants' emotions. Make space for discussion verbally or in writing
- Validate and support those who have been targeted
- Follow up one-on-one outside of class
- Provide resources

There may be times when you offend someone or make a hurtful comment. Although you may not have intended to be offensive, that may be the real impact from something you say or do. Therefore, give yourself grace and understanding that it wasn't your intent and take responsibility for how your actions or words impacted others. Practice a commitment to "getting it right" rather than "being right." If you receive critical feedback, reflect on it. Ask how you can get it right and repair the relationship.

It may also be that we are not aware that a comment is hurtful. To help foster an environment where participants can take the risks needed to learn with others, you may want to explicitly discuss how you plan to handle these moments and offer ways that they can let you know (e.g., Exit slips, etc.).

Validating Experiences

Paraphrase what participants say to ensure you understand their statements and questions.

Recognize when participants are speaking from their own experiences and validate them. If you feel there is something to unpack from a participant's statement, ask a reflective question and use the language "and" instead of "but".

For example, a participant might say that, from their experience, parents of color tend to be less involved in their children's education. While this may be what they have experienced, this statement must be unpacked; it conforms to the myth and stereotype that parents of color (and people of color) are not interested in pursuing education. A response to the participant might sound like this: "What counts as being involved? How does that compare to a program's definition of parental involvement?" or "I recognize this is your experience, and I encourage you to think about the possibility of what participation may look like across various races and cultures."



Walking the Talk

Model the practices you teach and invite participants to share their respectful, productive feedback with you about each session. Consider setting up anonymous surveys in your LMS to collect data you can use to improve your own practices as an educator.

Here is a sample survey template:

Please share anything you'd like about Session (insert #), including any readings, narrated lectures, videos, knowledge check, assignments, or anything else. You might respond to any of the following prompts or share anything else on your mind: What supported your learning? What questions do you have remaining? Are there perspectives that you would have liked to see included or any idea that would better support your learning? Thank you for any info you share! We value your input.

Consider adding:

If you would like a personal response to anything you've said in this survey, please type your name here. Then, we will reach out to you during the following week- up to 7 days after the end of Lesson #. Or, feel free to send a message directly to your instructional team for a faster response. We are always here to help you!

Managing Air Space

Recognize who takes up more time, or air space, during conversations. In class, be explicit that participants must share air space. If certain learners continually dominate conversations, ask to speak to them outside of class and address the concern. Offer them ways to self-reflect both on what may be their own exuberance and the impact for others. We want to be able to support both. Recognize power structures in place that manifest in sharing air space. It's not unusual for White men to dominate conversations, for example. Air space doesn't necessarily need to be equal; focus on it being equitable. For instance, Indigenous and Black women are often excluded from class conversations, so it is okay if they take up more air space than what is equal. Note these are not definitive rules, rather they are examples of how power dynamics show up during discussions. Adjust your understanding based on the context of your class. One simple way to foster more equitable responses is to have times where participants write down or reflect on their answers before you open the discussion. This also allows those who may process things more slowly the time to formulate a response.

Concluding Words

"All of us are children, really, gathering our quiver of thoughts, stringing them carefully on bent bow, and aiming them into the future, hoping a connection will be made" (Noori, 2013, p 55). We hope these materials help guide your arrows toward connection and learning. **Thank you. Miigwech.**



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