

Learners and Learning II 15:255:607

3 Credits

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 10-4:30 and by appointment	Prerequisites or other limitations: Students must be matriculated in the EdD program
Mode of Instruction: <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Permission required: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes

Learning goals

Students will:

- develop a critical perspective on approaches to professional development
- understand key adult development and learning theories and know how to apply them to professional development training design
- be able to develop and facilitate interactive, engaging and effective training and professional development sessions for adult professionals in their field

This course is aligned with the following EdD Program goals:

- Work with instructional staff to enact improvements
- Hone pedagogical [andragogical] skills to lead instructional improvements at the classroom and local levels

Course catalog description

This course focuses on developing theoretical and practical knowledge about meeting the instructional needs of adult learners, with a particular emphasis on adults who are participating in change and professional development activities. The course will cover adult development and learning theories, as well as specific strategies for effectively teaching adults.

Course Overview

The task of participating in significant change efforts at the individual or organizational level is fundamentally a learning task. This means that participants in educational reform and improvement initiatives and professional development efforts related to them are adult learners. Those who support, guide and facilitate this process, therefore, are adult educators. Yet, educational leaders/change agents often lack knowledge of adult education theories. If they work in schools, they may probably mostly think of themselves primarily as teachers of younger learners, building administrators, instructional leaders, or something else, but probably not as adult educators.

This course is designed to address this gap by integrating theoretical and practical knowledge of adult development, learning, and change theories as well as providing experiences with adult educational practices and approaches that can be applied to designing and implementing learning for adults involved in change and improvement efforts. In this course, students will develop knowledge and tools for facilitating learning that are specific to adults through two means: by becoming immersed in theories, concepts, and practices of adult development, adult learning and adult education, and by focusing on one specific format for learning: interactive training.

The field of adult education has, in some ways, been shaped by efforts to understand and address the ways in which adult learners are different from younger learners. Theoretical and empirical work in the field addresses questions such as:

- How are adults in learning situations different from children?
- How does the adult condition shape how and what adults learn?
- How do contextual issues (at the programmatic and societal levels) influence learning for adults?
- In what ways should concepts of adulthood and learning shape teaching?
- What are the obstacles and barriers to learning in adulthood?

Most research on adult learning/change argues that the process is most effective when it is situated in the context, implemented over time, done in collaboration with colleagues, focused specifically on improving outcomes that are aligned with learning goals, and draws on research-based interventions. This approach is introduced in the course Models of Professional Development (15:267:604). However, there are also times when workshops and shorter, more focused learning opportunities are called for to help professionals gain specific information for immediate use. Because workshop type professional development is still so prevalent, in this

course you will learn how to determine when it is a good match with learning goals and how to use adult learning theory and interactive training strategies to be as effective as possible.

The course is highly experiential. As we are all adult learners, we will have constant incidental and created opportunities to reflect on and learn from adult learning experiences of our own and others as they unfold during the course. We have a unique opportunity in this course to integrate our own personal experiences with those who have written about adulthood and learning, as learners, researchers, and practitioners. The course will traverse the realms of formal research and theory and personal experience (yours and other's). In this way, I hope that you will be able to use it to reflect on, critique, and/or affirm the theoretical literature on adulthood and learning and think about its implications for your practice as educational change leaders.

Upon completion of this course you will have a greater understanding of how adult learning differs from youth learning and how this matters to the facilitation of change and development efforts. Additionally, participants will have specific understanding of teaching strategies and techniques that are specifically suited to adult learners.

Texts

Required Book:

- Merriam, S.B., & Bierma, L. L. (2014). *Adult learning: linking theory and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Please order ASAP from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or any other online book sources you choose.

Other Readings

- Required book chapters and articles will be available on the course website
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Recommended Text

(I will provide relevant excerpts for all assigned chapters)

- Silberman, M. & Auerbach, C. (2006). *Active training: A handbook of techniques, designs, case examples, and tips* (3rd Edition). San Francisco: Pfeiffer. (Note, there is a new edition, but it's much more expensive, either is fine)

Sakai Access

This course will be delivered partially online through Sakai. Online discussions and chats will take place there. Please watch course announcements for further details.

Assignments:

1. Course readings and preparation for class discussion (10% of grade)

Complete all reading assignments. Participate, according to the week by week schedule, in on-line and face-to-face discussions.

For weeks 2-6, you will engage in “muddiest point reflective free writing”. After you complete the writing, you should write in one or two sentences what the muddiest point is in the assigned readings for the week and then write as freely as you can about your understanding/misunderstanding related to this point. Try, as you write, to relate what you consider to be muddy to your experiences, what we have already read, and what you know. You should write for 10-15 minutes and/or produce a paragraph or two. Don’t worry too much about writing technicalities.

The point of doing this is to help you (a) make better sense out of what you read, (b) better grasp what you do not understand, and (c) sort out misunderstandings on your own.

In Week 7, we will evaluate the helpfulness of this task in light of my wanting to hold you accountable for doing the reading and working at making sense of it and relating it to the course content. This assignment may be revised at that point or continued, as is.

Additional assignments related to the readings will be made for online class meetings. These will be announced and posted on Sakai within a day or two after the previous online class.

You should create a folder in your drop box for “muddiest point reflective free writing” and drop each weekly reflection in their. Be prepared to share your free writing with classmates.

2. Theoretical analyses of adult learning (45% of grade)

The purpose of this assignment is to use theoretical lenses to analyze and gain a deeper understanding of adult learning experience and the theoretical frameworks which inform adult education.

1. Develop three narratives (narratives means to create a description that has a beginning, middle and end; it might have a plot twist, a journey, a hero, etc.) of adult learning experiences. Use your experience and those of two others to do so.
 - a. Create a narrative of an adult learning experience you have facilitated or in which you have participated. Briefly describe the purpose, context audience and objectives and then describe how learning was organized and what activities and materials were used. What did the trainer and participants actually do?
 - b. Interview two adults about an adult learning experience which they have facilitated or in which they have participated. Ask them to describe the purpose, context audience and objectives and then describe how learning was organized and what activities and materials were used. What did the trainer and participants actually do? Develop a

separate narrative of each of their experiences that closely parallels the structure of yours.

In the past, students have asked for clarification on what constitutes a narrative. Retrieved from: <http://www.units.miamioh.edu/technologyandhumanities/nardef.htm>

A narrative is some kind of retelling, often in words (though it is possible to mime a story), of something that happened (a story). The narrative is not the story itself but rather the telling of the story -- which is why it is so often used in phrases such as "written narrative," "oral narrative," etc. While a story just is a sequence of events, a narrative recounts those events, perhaps leaving some occurrences out because they are from some perspective insignificant, and perhaps emphasizing others. In a series of events, a car crash takes a split second. A narrative account, however, might be almost entirely about the crash itself and the few seconds leading up to it. Narratives thus shape history (the series of events, the story of what happened).

2. Analyze and critique each narrative using an adult learning, adult development, or general learning theory as a lens. You should use a different theory for each narrative.
3. Write a final synthesis that looks across the three narratives to draw conclusions about what made these experiences positive, effective, and adult--or not.

Page length: 13-20 pages (approximately 4-6 pages per narrative and analysis plus 1-2 pages for final synthesis).

Due dates:

Part 1: Three narratives, Week 3, September 17th

Part 2: Analysis, critique, and synthesis, Week 13, December 3rd

You are strongly encouraged to write the analysis and critique for each narrative as you identify relevant theories. In other words, you should be working on this assignment all semester.

3. Adult Learning Experience Design, Implementation and Reflection (45% of grade)

For this assignment you will have the opportunity to practice what you have been learning. You will identify an adult learning topic that (ideally) is appropriate for and can be implemented in your work place, conduct and analyze a needs assessment, develop an interactive training session, implement it, and reflect on the learning experience. Ideally, this should be a design that can be useful to you in "real life". Secondly, if you can tie it in with what you're thinking about for your dissertation topic, that would be great.

If you can not realistically implement the design in your workplace, I will work with you to find alternative adult education contexts for you to do so.

1. Develop a design proposal which states the general topic, a rationale for that topic, the target audience, and the timing of delivery. If you need permission to conduct the training, please include your plan for getting that. If you intend to facilitate this learning experience in your work place, please discuss and get approval of it from the appropriate supervisor ASAP. Page length: 1-2 pages. **Due Date: Week 4, September 24th (3% of total grade)**

2. Develop a needs assessment plan. State who you will involve in needs assessment and how you will conduct the needs assessment. Design a needs assessment instrument. **Due Date: Week 5, October 1st (3% of total grade)**

3. Conduct and analyze needs assessment. Carry out your needs assessment plan, analyze results, and write a summary and implications for design including goals and objectives for learning experience (make sure you use Silberman to guide you in articulating goals and objectives). **Due Date: Week 9, October 29th (3% of total grade)**

4. Develop a three-hour adult learning experience (it can be designed to be delivered in one three-hour session or broken in to two or three parts) on a topic of your choice that demonstrates understanding of appropriate adult learning theories covered this semester. Your design must include the following components:
 - a. Cover page with title, name of agency/organization/school or type of audience, length of module (in hours), name of trainer (you!), trainer qualifications (experience/background, degree, etc.), suggested number of participants
 - b. Background information which should include a description of setting and rationale/overall purpose/need and should include a description of target organization, and details on trainees and other pertinent information.
 - c. A brief review of literature on the topic which demonstrates you are drawing on a research base for the content of the training
 - d. Needs assessment plan and tools (cut and paste from part 2)
 - e. Instructional goals and objectives (cut and paste from part 3)
 - f. Materials needed (list of handouts and other media and supplies)
 - g. Detailed description of each activity. For each activity, state which goal/objective it addresses, the training methodology used, instructions or main discussion points for trainer (e.g., if you are using a powerpoint presentation, include in the notes section what the trainer should be saying or covering during the presentation), materials needed, and time allotted. Include a summary table that shows the format, materials, activities and objectives for each activity. In other words this is the manual for implementing the design. Write it as if you were going to give it to someone else to implement the design.
 - h. All relevant materials (hand outs, powerpoint slides, worksheets, etc.) integrated with the detailed description.
 - i. Evaluation Plan that describes the purpose of the evaluation, how the results of the evaluation will be used, which evaluation levels will be used and a rationale for that choice, and methods. Include evaluation instrument(s).

Due Date: Week 11, November 12th (33% of total grade)

5. Implement the design and then reflect on the process. If you have broken up your design into parts, you need only implement one part. Reflect on the process by considering your experience and observations as the adult educator and evaluation results. Your reflection should discuss the following:
What went well?

What didn't go so well? Why? Did you have to make any on the spot decisions to address challenges? How did that go?

If you were to do this again, what changes would you make and why?

What did you notice about yourself as an adult educator? What did you notice about the participants as adult learners?

What adult education theories do you feel you integrated especially effectively into your design and in what ways could you draw on them further if you were to revise your design?

What do you plan to do as follow up to implementing this design? Page length: 4-6 pages.

Due Date: Week 15, December 17th (3% of total grade)

Topic Outline/Schedule & Assignments

Class	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments/Activities
1	9/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of the course Introduction: Exploring definitions of adulthood Training vs professional development vs learning Creating Opening Exercises 	Silberman, Chap 3, Opening Exercises	
2	9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaches to professional development 	McCann et al. What should PD look like? Joyce and Calhoun, Ch 1: The faces of PD Fogarty & Pete: Ch 3 Some things we know about PD	Conduct interviews for adult learning narratives
3	9/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of learning theories Needs assessment and training objectives 	Merriam and Bierema, Ch 2: Traditional learning theories Rogers, Learning and adult education Queeny, What is needs assessment Silberman, Ch 1 & 2	Online class Adult learning narratives due
4	9/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Development Theories Teacher change Training design <p style="color: red; text-align: center;">HEAVY READING WEEK</p>	Merriam, Chapter 12 Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler, Appendix A Smith, et al., pp.6-22: Review of literature on teacher change Helsing, et al., Putting the "Development" in PD Or Guskey, PD and Teacher Change Silberman, Ch 7: Designing active training Silberman, Ch 8: Sequencing ideas	Design proposal due

Class	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments/Activities
5	10/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Learning Theories and approaches: Andragogy • Brain friendly lectures and alternative approaches to lectures 	Merriam & Bierema, Ch 3: Andragogy Brookfield, Ch 5, Alternative Interpretations and Applications Silberman Chapter 4, Preparing brain-friendly lectures Silberman, Chapter 5: Alternatives methods to lecturing [Strongly recommended: Knowles, Chapter 4, A theory of adult learning: Andragogy]	Needs assessment plan due
6	10/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Learning Theories and approaches: Self directed learning • Training applications 	Merriam and Bierema, Ch 4: Self directed learning Brookfield, Ch 3: Exploring self-directedness in adult learning, plus pp 81-89 Slavit & MCDuffie, Self-directed teacher learning Silberman, Chapter 16, Providing for back-on-the-job application	Online class Receive feedback on needs assessment plan
7	10/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult learning theories and approaches: Transformative learning 	Merriam and Bierema, Ch 5: Transformative learning Poutiatine, What is transformation? Kitchenham, Teachers and Tech: a transformative journey [Recommended: Mezirow, Learning to think like an adult]	Implement needs assessment, analyze results
8	10/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult learning theories and approaches: Experiential Learning 	Merriam and Bierema, Chp 6: Experience and learning Burke, Experiential PD: A model for meaningful change Silberman, Ch, 6, Using experiential learning approaches	Implement needs assessment, analyze results
9	10/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Learners: Considering Diversity 	Merriam and Bierema, Chp 12: Culture and Context Flannery, D. D., Changing Dominant Understandings of Adults as learners Guy, T. C., Culture as Context for Adult Education Amstutz, Adult Learning: moving toward more	Needs analysis and training goals and objectives due
10	11/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contexts for adult learning 	Brookfield, Ch 10, Structuring programs around learners needs and abilities Lave and Wenger, Legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice *Brookfield, Ch 11, Political analysis of discussion groups	Online class Work on training design

Class	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments/Activities
11	11/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on yourself as an adult educator Evaluating adult learning 	*Brookfield, Ch 3, The value of autobiography Pratt, Good teaching? one size fits all? Brookfield, Chapter 11, Evaluating learning and its facilitation Silberman, Chapter 17, Evaluating an active training program	Training Design Due
12	11/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to learning 	Argyris, Teaching smart people how to learn *Brookfield, Ch 4. Understanding the tensions and emotions of learning Daloz, The story of Gladys	Online class Feedback on training design?
	11/26	THANKSGIVING BREAK	NO CLASS	
13	12/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Motivation 	Merriam and Bierema, Ch 8: Motivation and learning Chaney, Best and Worst Incentives for PD Tan, et al., Tensions and Dilemmas in teacher PD	Adult Learning Theoretical Analysis due.
14	12/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcoming resistance 	*Brookfield, Ch 11, Overcoming resistance Seifert & Stacey, Ch 9-12 Silberman, Ch 12	Online class
15	12/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrap up 	Brookfield, Chapter 12, Facilitating learning	Training reflection due