

Course Title	Understanding the Adult Learner 3 Credits
Course Number	15:233:543
Instructor's Name	Tom Heaney, Ph.D. Principal, Adult Learning Unleashed • ALU Consulting Emeritus Professor • National Louis University, Chicago
Semester and Year	Summer, 2016
Instructor's Office	Adult Learning Unleashed 4300 North Marine Drive • 1204 Chicago, IL 60613
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Virtual Office Hours	Synchronous: chat, email, Skype—by appointment Asynchronous: submit questions to virtual office
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Course Description	Understanding the Adult Learner (15:233:543) has the overall goal of guiding you through an exploration of the multiple dimensions of adult learners by immersing you in key theories, concepts related to adult learners and practices that are appropriate for meeting the needs of this population. This course is designed to give you the opportunity to investigate the physiological, psychological, and psychosocial changes in the adult life span and the implications these changes have for adult learning.
Course Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the learning needs and characteristics of diverse adult learners in the varied social contexts and environments in which adult learning occurs, including non-formal, informal, and formal education • Be able to critically analyze and reflect upon the adult education literature concerning adult learner characteristics and participation, adult development and adult learning • Be able to use adult learning and development theories to reflect on and analyze teaching and learning
Prerequisite(s):	None
Permission(s)	None



Text	<p>Merriam, Sharan B., and Bierema, Laura L. (2014) <i>Adult Learning: Linking Theory to Practice</i>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</p> <p>Newman, Michael. (1999) <i>Maeler's Regard: Images of Adult Learning</i>. Sydney: Victor Stewart. Book can be downloaded free from Mike Newman's website.</p>
Course Overview	<p>This is a hands-on course and your participation in all activities is as important as completion of the readings and formal assignments. You should do the assigned reading first, listen to any posted lectures second, and then complete the weekly activities. It is very important to stay on schedule so please put aside time on the weekend to do the reading ahead of the week. There generally are multiple steps to doing the weekly activity and some depend on your classmates, so you will need to stay on schedule.</p> <p>The course is designed to be an adult learning experience. This will give you opportunities to experience and reflect on the adult learning theories in real time and think about how they relate to practice. This is my first time teaching this class fully online and for many of you this will be your first semester taking a fully online class. Consequently, it is important that we do our best to make the technology work for us and provide feedback and ask questions when there are problems so that we can engage in problem solving quickly and (hopefully) efficiently.</p>
Assignments	<p>Class participation: You are expected to complete all reading assignments, fully and professionally participate in the online discussions and activities, and submit assignments on or before their due dates. All assignments should be submitted through the course website. All written work should have a cover page, be double spaced, use Times New Roman 12 pt. font, and include a properly formatted reference page using APA style. For more information about APA and guidance on formatting, visit https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/. Please include a cover page or heading for every assignment submitted to dropbox and save it with your name in the title.</p> <p>Please note that instructions of where or how to submit assignments is available in either the left-hand menu of the course webpage (for assignments 2, 3, and 4) or within the description of the activity on the weekly activity page.</p>

Assignment 1

Online discussions/Weekly activities (20% of overall grade):

Weekly activities are designed to help you enhance your understanding of assigned texts, draw connections between them and your current experiences, critically analyze their relevance to adult education contexts, and synthesize across topics from week to week. You are expected to participate fully in all weekly assigned discussions/activities. The rubric below details how your participation will be assessed. The learning benefits of participating in weekly activities are cumulative. Although assessment points for each individual weekly discussion/activity are few, your diligent participation adds up to your being successful in completing all assignments and fully benefitting from the course.

	Below Expectations	Average	Above Average	Superior	%
Content Quality of Posts and responses to Padlets	Post does not relate to the prompt or is missing.	Post responds to prompt but ideas are not stated clearly and/or fully elaborated.	Post responds to the prompt and ideas are stated relatively clearly; ideas are elaborated. There is little or no reference to the text or other sources	Post responds to the prompt, ideas are stated clearly and are well elaborated, and connections are draw to the text and/or outside references.	40%
Responses to classmates	Does not respond to posts from classmates.	Responds to fewer than required number of classmates.	Responds to required number of classmates, but response is not particularly meaningful or substantive.	Responds to required number of classmates in meaningful and substantive ways.	20%

	Timeliness	Does not submit assignment on time	N/A	N/A	Submitted assignment on time.	10%
	Insights and relevance of responses	Little or no contribution to knowledge in an area of inquire	Some relevance and insight, but minimal	Relevance and insight, but not well articulated or defended with a rationale	Significant relevance and insight	30%

Assignment 2

Book Review of Maeler’s Regard: Images of Adult Learning (30% of overall grade):

In learning we make meaning. In making meaning we make choices. These choices can be moral and political ones. The author argues that learning and teaching are not just means by which we achieve personal growth, but tools to be used in the struggle for social justice.

This original and challenging book examines the mysterious and complex process of learning. The text contains:

- Vivid and compelling images—of a painting, a climb, the surf, a kidnapping, New York, and a long and exhilarating night in a jazz club
- Descriptions of people—on a picket line in South Africa, in the brick kilns of north Pakistan, in a women’s refuge in Sydney, in a theater in London, and on an oil tanker in the Persian Gulf
- Stories and case studies—of resistance, fear, success, and persistent application
- Explanation and analysis of the ideas of activists, educators, philosophers, and social theorists.

The book is written in an accessible style. It covers a range of themes, including experience, critical and uncritical thinking, consciousness, forms of power and social control, social movements, civil society, social action, resistance and protest, learning as social beings, and learning as moral beings.

In this assignment, you are asked to write a book review suitable for an academic publication, approximately 1000–1200 words. You should read the book throughout the semester, with the final review being **due at the end of the term on week 11**.

	Below Expectations	Average	Above Average	Superior
Reflects an understanding of the text	Shows little comprehension of the text	Shows a minimal understanding of the	Shows some understanding of the themes and	Shows a clear understanding of the themes and purpose

			text	content of the text	of the text	
	Engages the text critically	Does not engage the text critically	Shows a minimal critique of the text	Engages with the sections of the text in a critical manner	Presents a critical analysis of the text	20%
	Draws reasonable conclusions for practice	Does not relate the text to practice	Draws some conclusion for practice, but without a rationale	Draws some conclusions for practice, but with limited rationale	With rational argument, draws relations to practice	20%
	Follows APA style for citations and references	Does not include citations and references or use APA style.	Includes minimal references or misuses APA style.	Uses APA style and provides some citations.	Includes ample citations and references and uses APA style.	

Assignment 3

Learn something new this week, then teach someone what you learned (30% of overall grade)

This assignment creates a laboratory situation that gives you an experience of being an adult learner and an adult educator. It prompts you to reflect on what you have learned as a result. It also gives you the opportunity to learn about several digital tools that may be of use to you as an adult educator.

This is a three-part assignment. You will carry out Part 1 and 3 individually and Part 2 with a small group (to be assigned by the instructor after the first week of class). Your small group must create a lesson schedule (by the end of Week 2), which includes the following information: who will present what lesson, when, mode of lesson (synchronous/asynchronous), and who will be responsible for providing feedback (individual or collaboratively composed among group members). Everyone must teach one lesson to at least one student (although you can have more than one student), and everyone must be a designated learner at least once (although you can be a student more than once). Lessons should be completed between Weeks 4 and 10. It is highly recommended that you space them out during this period. Note that the grade is more based on the quality of reflection, analysis, connection to theory and practice.

Part 1: Learn/Reflect (10%).

- Select a digital tool (by week 3) you would like to learn how to use. The tool should be something you could imagine using in your practice as an adult educator and are interested in knowing more about. I have provided a list of suggestions below which focus mainly on presentation type tools, but you can go beyond the list. Whatever you select should be something you can learn

how to use in about two hours.

- After you have learned how to use the tool, write a reflection on why you chose to learn this task, how you went about learning it, how the learning process went, and with regard to being an adult learner, what you got from the experience (2-3 pages). **Due at the end of Week 5.**

Part 2: Teach/Learn and Give/Get Feedback (10%).

- Based on the schedule you and your group have arranged, teach members of your assigned small group how to use the tool you learned (20-30 minute lesson). Do not simply replicate how you learned how to use it. Think about how to improve on how you were taught, and plan accordingly. Your lesson should have a learning objective, explain what the tool is and what it can be useful for, and it should draw on adult learning principles. Your lesson need not lead to tool use competency, but rather focus on tool affordances and introduce learners to some of its key features and how they are accomplished. You can use any digital tools you find helpful to present your lesson. Your lesson should be interactive, not just a lecture/demonstration. It can be completed synchronously or asynchronously.
- Everyone in your group must be a designated learner at least once. This means participating in the teaching session and providing feedback. Or a group can decide that they will all be learners for all members' sessions and will work collaboratively to provide feedback. However, you can also participate in as many training sessions as you like (no feedback necessary beyond the one you signed up to provide feedback for).
- The designated learner should give written feedback (submitted within 5 days of the lesson to the student instructor), which draws on adult learning theories we have learned so far. The feedback should address questions such as: What was a strength of this lesson? What challenged you as a learner? In what ways did the instructor make the learning experience "adult"? What suggestions could you give the instructor to improve instruction?

Part 3: Synthesis (10%)

- Reflect on your teaching process based on your initial reflections and your "student's" feedback. Draw on adult learning theories you have learned so far to help you understand and make meaning from the experience (2-3 pages). Submit initial reflection, feedback, and synthesis by the end of the semester. Use the experiences of being an adult learner and an adult educator to discuss what you have learned about both roles and how these relate to the theories we read this semester. **Due at the end of semester, Week 11.**
- Suggested Tools to Learn (these are all free or have free trial versions):
 - [VoiceThread.com](https://voicethread.com) (licensed)
Upload PowerPoint and add a sound over.
 - [Screencast-o-matic.com](https://screencast-o-matic.com)
Record your screen (Keynote, PowerPoint, etc.) with video of you to the side.
 - [Piktochart.com](https://piktochart.com)
Use templates and graphics to create a presentation.

- Gliffy.com
14 day trial. Create diagrams, charts.
- Asana.com
Free trial. Manage a group project.
- Haikudeck.com
Free trial. Presentation software.
- Powtoon.com
Create cartoons, export to YouTube.
- Videoscribe.co
Free trial. Select objects and text to have drawn on screen.
- Tawe.co
Use photos or graphics to create presentation with voiceover. Free app.
- Debategraph.org
Create interactive maps across multiple computers.
- Zaption.com
Interactive video lessons.
- Prezi.com
Non-linear interactive web-based presentations. Insert objects, media and information in a 3D environment.
- Yellowdig.com
Resource sharing and blog tool for the LMS
- *Nebula (proprietary NWU) graphic asynchronous discussion tool.*
- Padlet.com
Bulletin board for posting notes.

	Below Expectations	Average	Above Average	Superior
Lesson	Lesson is not presented in a clear and engaging way. The purpose and usefulness of the tool is not explained.	The lesson is not presented in a clear and engaging way or the purpose and usefulness of the tool not fully explained	The lesson is presented in a clear and engaging way and the purpose and usefulness of the tool is explained	The lesson uses digital tools in an outstanding way to make the lesson clear and engaging and the purpose and usefulness of the tool is fully explained
Feedback	Feedback is not provided or is very limited in depth, description, and helpfulness	Feedback provides some useful information, but may just skim the surface of description	Feedback describes the lesson and makes useful suggestions about how to improve	Feedback is descriptive, analytic, and provides in-depth and meaningful

				the lesson		
	Reflections	Facilitator is not reflective about the experience of completing the assignment	Facilitator does some reflection on the experience of completing the assignment	Facilitator reflects on what has been learned about adult learning and teaching and the online tools learned.	Facilitator reflects on what has been learned about adult learning and teaching and the online tools learned and identifies implications for practice	30%
	Collaboration	Does not participate in the work of the group to complete assignment	Works with group to complete assignment but is late or not very responsive	Works with group to complete assignment, is on time, and responsive	Works with group to complete assignment, is on time, and responsive; takes a leadership role	20%

<p>Assignment 4</p>	<p>Adult Learner Autobiography (4-6 pages/20% of overall grade)</p> <p>For this assignment, you will compose a learning autobiography that describes your experiences as an adult learner (not necessarily in the class, although that could be one episode; this is not meant to be a reflection on the class per se although the class or the program may figure as one element of the autobiography). The purpose is to consider your experiences in relationship to the theories and concepts we have covered during the semester as a way to synthesize what we have covered. You should focus on memorable and meaningful learning experiences and explain why you consider these to be significant; use the topics we covered this semester to help you gain a more theoretical perspective on them. You should organize your paper in such a way that allows you to integrate and make connections with the adult development and adult learning theories covered in this class. The autobiography may include representations of your experiences from childhood (if they are relevant to who you are as an adult learner) to adulthood. It should conclude with a discussion of how reflecting on your own experiences as an adult learner shapes your thinking about being an adult educator. Your autobiography must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to you and the learning experiences you select to share • Well written descriptions of key learning experiences • Analysis of how your learning experiences and your response to them would be supported by the adult development and adult learning theories discussed throughout the semester • Implications for your practice as an adult educator
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Your final project can take the form of a traditional paper (4-6 pages), integrate multimedia with text, or use digital story telling as ways to present your adult learning autobiography. This assignment will be **due at the end of week 8**.

	Below Expectations	Average	Above Average	Superior	%
Content Quality Paper	Submission does not respond to the specific description of the assignment or is missing.	Responds to most of the specific description of the assignment but is not very clear, does not make any reference to any assigned texts, does so in a surface way, or does not go very deep into analysis/reflection	Responds fully to the description of the assignment, in a clear way, but does not go very deep into analysis/reflection, is not completely clear, or makes little reference to assigned texts.	Responds fully to the description of the assignment, in a clear way, is fully analytic/reflective and makes substantive reference to assigned texts.	80%
Timelines	Did not submit assignment on time	N/A	N/A	Submitted assignment on time.	10%
Spelling, Grammar and punctuation	Significant errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation detract from the	Some errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation which may detract	Errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation are minimal but noticeable;	No or very few punctuation spelling, or grammar errors.	10%

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