Theory and Practice of Adult Learning and Training (18:829:559)
Fall 2022 | Tuesdays 3:35-6:05 | canvas.rutgers.edu

Syllabus

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Overview

The purpose of this course is to gain an understanding of the principles of adult learning and development, general models of learning and instructional design, and how to apply them in a variety of training contexts for multiple purposes and audiences. We will examine a range of training models and strategies. Some of the questions we'll explore are:

- What do we know about adult learners and learning?
- In what ways do the distinctions of adult learners suggest specific teaching/training and learning strategies?
- What are general models and best practices for training adults?
- How can training models, practices, and specific instructional strategies be employed to be responsive both to the needs of learners and the demands for training?
- How does the environment (e.g., organizational culture, rapid technological advances) intersect with adult learning and training practice?

By the end of the course, students will have developed the skills and learned the strategies to design and implement effective training programs for the context in which they are operating.

We have a unique opportunity in this course to integrate our own personal experiences with those who have written about adult learning and training. The course will marry formal research and theory with personal learning and training experience (yours, your classmates, mine, my clients, and others). In this way, I hope that you will be able to use this course to reflect on, critique, and/or affirm the theoretical and practical literature on adult learning and training to develop purposeful implications for your own practice.

Class Structure

Unless otherwise notes, we will meet synchronously each week (unless otherwise noted) from 3:35 to approximately 6:00 pm. You will also be expected to engage asynchronously with the material throughout the week. This is an applied course, and your participation in our synchronous class and the discussion board are as important as the completion of the readings and written assignments.

The class is essentially split into two parts. In the first part of the semester, we will focus primarily on adult learning and training theory and application. We will discuss readings on theoretical and practical issues in adult learning and training. It will be more didactic (relative to the second part of the semester) but will still be largely discussion-based. It will also include individual and small-group activities with application for practice. It is intended to provide a strong theoretical foundation for the second part of the course.

For part 2 (essentially one-third of the semester), students will demonstrate their developing knowledge of adult learning and training through the implementation of actual training sessions. All students will participate as both trainers and trainees. Debriefings of each experience will also be a part of class activities.

Required Reading
Readings will come from a combination of texts and online journals. All readings will be made available via Canvas. No text is required for purchase. The following books (from which most of our course readings come) are recommended for your personal libraries:

Biech, E. (2017). The art and science of training. ATD Press.

Caffarella, R. S., & Daffron, S. R. (2013). Planning programs for adult learners: A practical guide. Jossey-Bass.

Kirkpatrick, J. D., & Kirkpatrick, W. K. (2016). Kirkpatrick's four levels of training evaluation. ATD Press.

Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2018). Adult learning: Linking theory and practice. Langara College.

Assignments
1. **Complete all reading assignments, attend class, and engage in discussion.** There is a significant discussion-based component for this course. Students are expected to log in for class, come prepared (having read the readings for the class), and participate in the discussions. In reading the material, come prepared to answer the following questions:
   - What stood out for you as a key concept discussed in the reading?
   - What, if anything was unclear to you in the readings or do you want to talk about further?
   - What resonates with your own work, training, and/or lived experiences?

   If you expect to be absent from class, please email me as soon as possible.

2. **Participate in the discussion boards.** Each week, our message board will have one or more reflection questions or scenarios to which you will be expected to respond. Engage on the message board at least twice during the week (the more the merrier!). Your first post should be a unique response to the weekly topic(s). Your second post should be a substantive response to a classmate's post. Unique posts and responses to classmates should be substantive, displaying depth of thought, mastery of content, and willingness to engage with those with different perspectives from one's own. (Note: For the purposes of discussion board contributions, the week runs from Tuesday at 6:05 pm (after class) through Monday at 11:59 pm.)

3. **Live virtual training segment and reflection.** You will have 30 minutes of time to conduct a segment of a **virtual** training session. You should draw on the texts and discussions from this course to guide your planning and implementation. You may train us on any topic using any materials you choose. Immediately following your training segment, the class will reflect on and debrief their experience as participants.

   After you have presented your lesson, write a 3- to 5-page reflection on the experience. **It is due two weeks after your presentation.** This reflection should include:
   - Information about your process of preparing for the lesson (e.g., choices and decisions you made),
   - Your perceptions of how the lesson went (strengths and challenges) and the rationale behind that
   - What you might do differently next time and why
   - Your reaction to classmate feedback
   - What you learned and your retrospective reaction to the experience.

4. **Training Design** (due December 16, 2022). Design and write a two-to-three-hour training module on a topic of your choice. Your training module should include a title page, background information, instructional goals/objectives, materials needed, instructional outline, and evaluation plan. See "Training Design Guidance and Sample Outline" for more details about this assignment.

Each of the four components described above (attendance/participation in class, substantive discussion board participation, virtual training module and reflection, and final training design) is worth 25% of your course grade.

Class Calendar of Topics and Assignments

Week	Date of Class Mtg and Start of Week	Topic	Readings/Assignments (To be read or completed by the date for which they are listed)
1	Sept 6, 2022	Introductions Expectations and norms Syllabus review Overview of the training process	
	Sept 10, 2022	STUDENT INFORMATION FORM DUE BY 11:59 PM	
2	Sept 13, 2022	Adult learners and learning styles	☐ Merriam & Bierema — Chapter 1, p. 1 - 23 ☐ Merriam & Bierema — Chapter 3, p. 42 - 60 ☐ Discussion posts
3	Sept 20, 2022	Adult learning theories	☐ Merriam & Bierema — Chapter 2, p. 24 - 41 ☐ Biech — Chapter 4, p. 73 - 95 ☐ Discussion posts
4	Sept 27, 2022	Responding to training requests Needs assessments Motivation	☐ Merriam & Bierema — Chapter 7, p. 146 - 167 ☐ Biech — Chapter 10, p. 201 - 213 ☐ Discussion posts
5	Oct 4, 2022	Training objectives Training & instructional design	☐ Biech — Chapter 3, p. 47 - 71 ☐ Caffarella & Ratcliff Daffron — Chapters 7 and 8, p. 161 - 208 ☐ Discussion posts
6	Oct 11, 2022	Instructional strategies	☐ Biech — Chapter 7, p. 131 - 160 ☐ Merriam & Bierema — Chapter 6, p. 104 - 126 ☐ Bell — Criteria for Selecting Instructional Strategies, p. 3 - 7 ☐ Discussion posts
7	Oct 18, 2022	Transfer of training Other models for training	☐ Caffarella & Ratcliff Daffron — Chapter 9, p. 209 - 231 ☐ Baldwin & Ford — Transfer of Training, p. 63 - 105

			☐ Brion — The Role of Culture, p. 384 - 393
			☐ Scott & Wadersman — The TFO Model
			☐ Discussion posts
8	Oct 25, 2022 MIDCOURSE REFLECTION	Culture and context Technology	☐ Merriam & Bierema — Chapter 12, p. 238 - 258 ☐ Amstutz — Moving Toward More Inclusive Theories, p. 19 - 32 ☐ Lynch & Leo — Context Dependent Learning, p. 15 - 24 ☐ Johnson-Bailey — Race Matters, p. 39 - 49 ☐ Johnson et al — Online Learning, p. 29 - 49 ☐ Discussion posts
9	Nov 1, 2022	Logistics & planning considerations Issues in workplace learning Evaluation	☐ Caffarella & Ratcliff Daffron — Chapter 11, p. 259 - 282 ☐ Kirkpatrick — Chapters 2, 5 - 9, p. 9 - 19, 39 - 85 ☐ Discussion posts
10	Nov 8, 2022 IN-PERSON CLASS MEETING	Critical thinking & perspectives	☐ Merriam & Bierema — Chapter 11, p. 212 - 237 ☐ Discussion posts
11	Nov 15, 2022	Training 1 — Nazifa Training 2 — Adam Training 3 — Tianwen	☐ Discussion posts REMINDER: Your training reflection is due two weeks after your training session.
12	Nov 22, 2022	Training 4 — Marissa Training 5 — Luke Training 6 — Yixuan	☐ Discussion posts
13	Nov 29, 2022	Training 7 — Victoria Training 8 — Janhvi Training 9 — BJ	☐ Discussion posts
14	Dec 6, 2022	Training 10 — Matt Training 11 — Jeanette	☐ Discussion posts

		Training 12 — Biage Training 13 — Sanya	
15	Dec 13, 2022	Conclusion Final questions re: assignment Course evaluation	☐ Discussion posts
	Dec 16, 2022	**TRAINING DESIGN DUE BY 11:59 PM**