

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF ADULT EDUCATION

HRD 600 - FALL, 2007

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Course Description

This course examines historical and philosophical foundations of adult education. Key trends and theoretical frameworks will be explored. Students will be introduced to a range of adult education practice domains in Maine and elsewhere. Creating a “community of learners” and modeling other adult education practices is a central goal of this course.

Goal

To provide an understanding of principal theoretical traditions in adult education and their historical roots. This course also seeks to provide students with opportunities for collaborative and experiential learning through a field-based study.

Course Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course participants will be able to –

1. Describe historical events and programs that have helped to form current practice in adult education
2. Identify major writers, their works, and the specific nature of these contributions to the history and philosophy of adult education
3. Understand the principal philosophical underpinnings of current adult education theory and practice
4. Increase awareness of gender, race, age, and class issues as they have been expressed in core conflicts in adult education historically and as they continue to be encountered by adult educators in contemporary practice.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking through writing, in-class group discussion, and asynchronous electronic communication (e.g., e-mail and “Blackboard” discussions)
6. Explore in depth a practice site in adult education and explain its philosophical underpinnings
7. Articulate a personal statement about the meaning of adult education

Major Questions Driving This Course of Study

1. What are the major historical events and programs that helped to shape current practice in adult education?
2. Who are the key players? What books did they write? What programs did they help to develop?
3. What are the principal philosophical underpinnings of adult education, including its assumptions, beliefs, and values?
4. What core conflicts/debates have been played out historically and continue to be played out in the field of adult education?
5. How and where is adult education practiced today?
6. What is the meaning of adult education as defined by selected writers and practitioners? As defined by each course participant?

Reading

Reading is an important part of most graduate courses. No exception here. I am asking everyone to read, at minimum, the following texts:

Lindeman, Eduard (1989). *The Meaning of Adult Education*.
Oklahoma Research Center for Continuing and Higher Education.

A choice of either Ueland, Brenda (1987), *If You Want to Write*,
St. Paul, MN.: Graywolf Press or Cameron, Julia (1998),
The Right to Write, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher

Sapphire (1996). *Push*. New York: Vintage Books.

In addition to the above-listed texts there are book chapters and journal articles posted on USM's library electronic reserves that will serve as background material for class discussions. Here are instructions for accessing these documents:

1. Go to the USM Library Website: <http://library.usm.maine.edu>
2. Click on tab "e-Reserves"
3. Type in course number - HRD 600 and click on "Search"
4. (on left) Click on USM-HRD600
5. Enter the password for this course: BRAHRD600
6. Click on the "Accept" Button

Finally, members of this course are encouraged to further explore authors treated in class and discover other major and minor contributors to adult education by checking out the periodical literature in this field. Several recommended journals in the USM-Gorham library are *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Adult Learning*, *Convergence*, *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, *Educational Gerontology*, and *The LLI Review*.

Writing

An alumnus of the Master of Science in Adult Education Program once commented that our program could be re-titled a “Master’s Degree in Writing.” While perhaps hyperbole, there is a small measure of truth here. Writing-to-learn is an important component in the total graduate experience as it is in this foundational course in the program.

Every individual taking HRD 600 for credit is expected to keep a “learning journal.” This is a log of insights, reflections, questions, analyses, observations, and perhaps creative endeavors. Your journal will allow you to process material we are treating in class, explore your feelings and thoughts about readings, and make connections between various stimuli.

It is recommended that you make two or three entries per week in your learning journal. Length of entries will vary by the subject matter chosen and individual writing style. These journals are for your eyes only, so you won’t have to be concerned with audiences outside yourself.

What will have another audience (me – and perhaps others with whom you choose to share them) are *three journal summaries*. These are synopses of recent learning logs that will range from 750 – 1500 words. In these summaries you may wish to liberally quote your original journal entries or add brand new material. The major purpose is to wrestle your big ideas to the surface and present them in a cogent manner.

These three journal summaries will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- clarity of articulation of ideas
- linking personal experiences and reflections with key ideas in the field of adult education (as expressed by specific references to core and/or supplementary readings)
- depth of thought and analysis (beyond a mere surface treatment of ideas)

In addition to the three journal summaries submitted at various intervals during the term, each member of HRD 600 will write an end-of-course essay on the theme, *the meaning of adult education*. Eduard Lindeman wrote a book with this title; you are asked only to write a 2000 – 3000 word essay! ☺ Take the best ideas you have learned this semester, include insights gleaned from your journals and conversations with classmates, and write a statement about what adult education means to you. Once again, please pay attention to the three criteria stated above.

You may submit your journal entries and final essay in either paper format or via email attachment (MS Word is preferred).

Field Study

Each student, working alone or in a small team with one or two others, will conduct a field study to examine a practice site in adult education. (Note: Class size will be a key determinant of the team vs. individual issue.) Please choose an area of adult education practice which (1) you are not already intimately familiar with and (2) you would enjoy studying and from which you would derive personal benefit. Examples from recent sections of HRD 600 include large and small public school adult education programs, a training division in a corporation, a public library, museum, university continuing education unit, consulting firm, staff development department in a hospital, area agency on aging, and a holistic health organization.

The field study involves a combination of investigation methods. These may include library and/or Internet resources to familiarize yourself with the general sub-field you have chosen, review of agency documents, personal interviews (telephone and/or face-to-face) with key staff, interviews with students/clients, touring the practice site, and if feasible participant observation.

In the final weeks of this course people will have time in class to share principal findings from their field study and facilitate a discussion. In this way each of us will widen and deepen our knowledge and appreciation of the scope of adult education. Specific criteria for these in-class presentation/discussions will be shared later in the course.

***Blackboard* Discussions**

The University of Southern Maine uses *Blackboard* as its online education vehicle. This program allows for class announcements, managing e-mail, posting documents, on-line discussions, and other communications. The primary function of *Blackboard* we shall be using in HRD 600 is the group discussion board. Participation in *Blackboard* discussions at selected times during the semester will be encouraged in order to expand on and nuance ideas we raise in class.

HRD 600 in Relation to CEHD Conceptual Framework

Using program content, knowledge, skills, and dispositions to design educational programs - This course will introduce graduate students to the important content and knowledge in the tradition of adult education. Adult education skills will be demonstrated by the facilitator and will also be practiced by students as part of their field study presentations.

Forging connections and partnerships - The field study portion of HRD 600 invites students to engage with key organizations in the community which practice adult education.

Modeling reflection and critical inquiry - Students and faculty will actively engage in examining and questioning existing thought regarding the meaning(s) of adult education as well as their own personal views.

Developing best professional practices - The course facilitator will be attentive to modeling best practices in adult education. These practices will be discussed/critiqued at critical junctures in the course.

Validating practices - Students will demonstrate best practices in adult education by way of writing (e.g., journal summaries and final course essay), participating in group discussion, and both planning and facilitating a field study report.

Criteria for Course Evaluation

The final grade for the course will be determined by the quality of the three journal summaries (25%), “The Meaning of Adult Education” essay (25%), field study presentation (25%), and the student’s overall contribution to group discussions (25%).

Accommodations

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with Mike as soon as possible. At any point in the semester if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel you could be performing at a higher level, consult with Mike. Students experience difficulty for a variety of reasons. For problems with writing skills or time management, make an appointment to see a student tutor at the Learning Center, Luther Bonney Hall, 2nd floor (780-4228). Help is also available through the Counseling Center, 106 Payson Smith Hall, 2nd floor (780-4706). In addition, Lewiston-Auburn College has a liaison for those who wish to discuss special accommodations. At LAC please contact Mary Sylvain-Leonas (753-6561).

Course Schedule

September 4 - Introduction to each other and the course

September 11 - Images and parameters of adult education
What is a liberal arts education?

September 18 - Brief history of the liberal arts tradition
The Lyceum Movement

September 25 - Chautauqua and its legacy
Previews of field study projects

- October 2 - Dewey, Lindeman, and Progressive Education
Discussion of Lindeman's *The Meaning of Adult Education*
In re-reserve: Read articles by Dewey ("My Pedagogic Creed"), Brookfield ("E. Lindeman"), and Hinitz ("Margaret Naumburg . . .")
First journal summary due
- October 9 - No Class: Columbus Day Holiday
- October 16 - Thorndike, Skinner and the Behaviorist Tradition
In e-reserve: Read chapter by Skinner ("What is Man?")
- October 23 - Rogers, Knowles, and the Humanist Tradition
Discussion of Ueland / Cameron books on writing
In e-reserve: Read two chapters by Rogers, Pearson and Podeschi's "Humanism and Individualism . . .," Knowles' "Andragogy . . .," and Knowles et al.. "Andragogy in Practice."
Second journal summary due
- October 30 - The Humanist Tradition (continued)
Horton, Freire and the Radical Tradition
Video: "You Got To Move"
In e-reserve: Read Horton's "The Shaping of a Radical Educator" and Freire's "The Adult Literacy Process . . ."
- November 6 - The Radical Tradition (continued)
Mezirow and Transformational Adult Education
Discussion of Sapphire's *Push*
In e-reserve: Read Cranton's "Understanding Transformative Learning"
Third journal summary due
- November 13 - "Careers in Progress" co-sponsored by the Adult Education Graduate Society. Class will meet in Bailey Hall 301
- November 20 - Field Study Presentations (Katy & Elizabeth / Amy / Zeke)
- November 27 - Field Study Presentations (Kat / Brian / Carolyn)
- December 4 - Field Study Presentations (Sarah & Kristina / Megan / Beth)
- December 11 - Field Study Presentations (Janet & Courtney / Chris & Scott / LeeAnne)
"The Meaning of Adult Education" essay due
- December 18 - Field Study Presentation (Kevin & Tonya)
Selected readings from "The Meaning of Adult Education" essays
Course evaluation