

**Pro-Seminar in Adult Education – AEGIS—Summer 2011**

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**I. Overview**

A key aim of AEGIS is the development of the reflective scholar practitioner. This requires familiarity with core theory, an in-depth critical examination of one's practice, and comfort with practical research tools. The pro-seminar begins this journey. Adult education is an interdisciplinary field of theory and practice that draws on social sciences. We do not assume that doctoral students in AEGIS will be familiar with all, or any, of the core theorists in the field. We do assume that students are experienced practitioners who come to the program with a wide range of disciplinary, theoretical, and practical backgrounds on which they can draw as they begin this journey. The pro-seminar provides a common language in our quest as adult education scholar-practitioners. It is a forum through which students can examine the common threads of adult learning and education that run throughout the different settings and disciplines through which they practice.

The pro-seminar is organized along three parallel tracks that reflect the three curriculum tracks of the AEGIS program: theory, practice, and research. Students will examine the main theoretical orientations and professional practice areas in the field. They will examine and critique the personal, philosophical, and professional presuppositions and underpinnings of their practice. Students will also examine and critique their assumptions and expectations regarding participation in the AEGIS program. Finally, they will be introduced to the underpinnings of research in general, and its application to research projects within the program.

**II. Objectives**

Students will:

- Examine the faculty's and the students' personal, philosophical, and theoretical orientations to adult education, and locate these within the field.
- Explore personal and collective assumptions regarding anticipated outcomes from taking part in the program.
- Examine differences among the various adult education fields of practice.
- Identify key theorists in the field and their contribution to the origins and development of the field.
- Think critically about basic presuppositions in their practice and in the field, including those formed by culture, gender, race, and class.
- Examine links between individual and systems level learning.
- Examine research underpinnings relevant to understanding the field.

### III. Books

Five books have been ordered through the TC book store. You can phone the book store at (212) 678 3920 for information about how to purchase these books and have them mailed to you. These will be used not only in this course, but as resources at various points throughout the program.

- Fisher-Yoshida, B., Geller, K.D., & Schapiro, S. A. (Eds.), (2009). *Innovations in transformative learning: Space, culture, & the arts*. New York: Peter Lang.  
A collection of chapters reflecting on applying and extending transformative learning theory from a post modern perspective. The book itself represents a learning community dialogue.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum Press
- Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Good overview of adult learning theories. Basic theory on adult learning.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Provides most recent thinking on transformative learning theory along with its relationship to adult development and various forms of practice.
- Wilson A.L. and Hayes, E. (Eds.), (2000). *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Provides a solid overview of the field of Adult Education and provides a range of perspectives on important issues.

In addition the following chapters will be available on Class Web.

From P.C. Candy (1991). *Self-direction for lifelong learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass:

- Ch. 1 What is Self-Directed Learning?;
- Ch. 2 The Growth and Interest in Self-Directed Learning;
- Ch. 4, Personal Autonomy;
- Ch. 7 Learner Control of Instruction;
- Ch. 11 Developing Skills for Self-Directed Learning, and;
- Ch. 12 Facilitating Independent Control of Subject Matter.

From: Gerald A. Straka, (Ed.). (2000). *Conceptions of self-directed learning: Theoretical and conceptual considerations*. New York: Waxman;

- Brookfield, S. Self-Directed Learning as a Political Idea, pp 9-22;
- Cseh, M. Watkins, K. & Marsick, V. J. From Intentional to Self-Directed Learning, pp. 49-74;
- Simons, R. Towards a Constructivist Theory of Self-Directed Learning, pp. 155-170;
- Strake, G. Modeling a More –Dimensional Theory of Self-Directed Learning, pp. 171-190.

Additional sources used during the course and will be posted include.

- Bitterman, J. (2000). "Antilogical Aspects of Graduate Study in Adult Education: Reflections on Motivational Conflicts in the AEGIS Program Experiences" in K. Illeris, (Ed.) *Adult Education in the Perspectives of the Learners* Roskilde, L. Denmark: Roskilde University Press.
- Kasl, E., Marsick, V.J. & Dechant, K. (1997). Teams as learners: A research-based Model of team learning. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 33. 227-246.
- Nicolaides, A. & Yorks, L. (2008). An epistemology of learning through. *Emergence: Complexity and Organization (E:CO)*, 10(1), 50-61.
- Yorks, L. & Kasl, E. (2002). Toward a theory and practice for whole-person learning: Reconceptualizing experience and the role of affect. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52 , 176-192.

#### IV. Assignments

There will be three written assignments for this course in addition to in-class activities.

- A statement of expectations
- A pre-course paper that should assist you in analyzing your own personal philosophy of adult education
- A description of a critical incident
- A paper reflecting on the way in which the literature in the course has assisted you in reframing and rethinking your philosophy of adult education

#### Pre-Course Assignments: Due June 1<sup>st</sup>

**You will need to E mail two copies of these two papers in advance so that they are received by June 1st:** One to me and one to Louise Singleton for the file—you will always be asked to turn in an extra copy of your papers for the file in all AEGIS courses. Papers should be double spaced, 12 point type, with margins 1 inch all around. If you do use any references, please follow APA style.<sup>1</sup>

Pre-Course Assignment # 1: Briefly state your expectations for AEGIS (1-1 ½ pages): what you hope to gain in the program, how you think that this experience will further your career goals.

Pre-Course Assignment # 2: Write a paper (Approximately 6 pages), in which you discuss your personal practice and philosophy as an adult educator. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on your own thinking and practice, not to develop a literature review, so you need not refer to the literature at this point. We will use the papers as a basis for group work in the pro-seminar.

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<sup>1</sup> You can purchase the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) through the bookstore. This is the style that is most frequently requested in submitting manuscripts for publication in our field.

Use the following questions as a guideline in preparing your paper:

- How do you describe the “typical” adult clientele whom you serve? i.e., what are their socio-economic and cultural characteristics? Educational background and work/social experience? What are their “typical needs?” What is your perception of their learning style preferences? In what ways does this impact your practice and philosophy?
- What historical factors or characteristics unique to the institution and setting are influential in your practice? In what ways does this impact your practice?
- What beliefs do you hold about teaching adults that might lead you to treat them differently than children?
- How do you translate your beliefs in your practice—for example, the ways in which you assess needs or design learning, your relationship to learners and their communities, the methods you use, the criteria by which you judge yourself or a program a success?

**In-Course Assignment: Due June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Write a paper (6-8 pages) in which you identify one or two new (to you) authors, theorists, or scholars (in the books recommended in this syllabus) that related to your personal and professional practice. Summarize a few key points from this thinking, and use that to help you reflect further on your practice, philosophy, and your specific field of practice. How does this new perspective help to explain or reframe your understanding of how you work with adults in your practice?

Use the following questions as a guideline:

- What has been said by the author(s) that has made you think further about what you and the field believe and practice as adult educators? Summarize the thinking expressed.
- Identify and discuss at least two assumptions that you now understand that you have made about your philosophy and practice in light of this theory? How does the assumption(s) affect the way you now understand your belief system and practice?
- How does this thinking related to other authors with whom you are familiar from your professional training, literature, philosophy, or the social sciences?

**In-course Activities**

You will be asked to join a group that will form in Week 1 and present in Week 3. The groups will read in greater depth--and “introduce” to others in the cohort in a creative fashion not just lecture)--the thinking of authors in one of the following “schools” of theory: adult development theory; Self-directed learning; social action theory; or transformative learning.

**V. Course Design and Topics**

The course is driven by an integration of theory, practice, and research approaches. The design of the course mirrors this focus. We will work in groups on areas of practice to identify issues and themes. As we do so, we will draw out relevant theory bases, which we will then explore as they relate to the field of adult education and learning. We will also look at research issues that underlie the design of our work together. Learning activities will include readings, project work, active learning exercises, critical reflection, and discussion.

### **June 8th: Orientation**

#### **June 7<sup>th</sup> : Map of The Field of Adult Learning Theory**

Merriam, et. al. Chapter 11

#### **June 8<sup>th</sup>: The Adult Learner – Philosophy & Practice of adult ed adult learner**

Antilogical Aspects of Graduate Study in Adult Education by Bitterman (Class Handout).  
Work in groups on personal philosophy and practice styles

#### **June 9<sup>th</sup> – The Adult Learner continued**

Merriam et. al. , Part I and Chapters 4 & 7

Wilson & Hayes, Chapter 5

Kasl, et. al.

#### **June 13<sup>th</sup> : Self-directed Learning**

Merriam, et. al. Chapter 5

Chapters from Candy

Straka articles

#### **June 14<sup>th</sup> Introduction to transformative learning**

In Mezirow, 2000 Chapters Mezirow Chapter, 1; Yorks & Marsick, Chapter 10, Taylor, Chapter 11, & Wiessner & Mezirow, Chapter 12

Merriam, et. al. Chapter 6.

Yorks & Kasl (2002)

In Fisher-Yoshida, et. al. Chapters , Fisher-Yoshida, et. al, Chapters 1 and 4, Leahy & Gilly, Chapter 2, Meyer Chapter 3. Schapiro, Chapter 5

#### **June 15<sup>th</sup> Adult Development and Adult Learning Theory**

Merriam, et. al. Chapter 12, and Chapter 13

In Mezirow, Kegan, Chapter 2; Belenky & Stanton, Chapter 3, Taylor, Chapter 6

Nicolaides & Yorks

#### **June 16<sup>th</sup> Social Action**

In Wilson & Hayes, Tisdell, Hanley & Taylor Chapter 9, Ch. 10--Johnson-Bailey & Cerver, Chapter 10, Ch. 13--Donaldson & Edelson, Chapter 13; Quigley Chapter 14

Freire

Merriam, et. al. Chapter 10

In Fisher-Yoshida, et. al.; Fareed, Chapter 6, Williams, Chapter 13.

In Mezirow— Daloz, Chapter 4, Brookfield, Chapter 5.

**June 20<sup>th</sup> Topic Group # 1 - Self directed learning**

*Student led*

**June 21<sup>st</sup> Topic Group # 2 - Transformative learning**

*Student led*

**June 22<sup>nd</sup> Topic Group #3 Adult development and adult learning theory**

*Student led*

**June 23<sup>rd</sup> Topic Group # 4 – Social Action**

*Student led*