

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota  
Schools of Graduate and Professional Programs  
Minneapolis

Summer 2021  
Theories of Adult Learning  
EDD 811 3 credits

**Course Dates/Hours:** Online May 3, 2021 to June 27, 2021 (no class on Monday, May 31)

**Online meetings:** Mondays, 5:00 p.m. via Zoom <https://umn.zoom.us/j/96592983248>

**Instructor Name:** Dr. Krista Soria

**Contact Information and Availability:**

Email- [ksoria@smumn.edu](mailto:ksoria@smumn.edu) or [ksoria@umn.edu](mailto:ksoria@umn.edu)

Phone- 612-624-1649 (email is preferred during the COVID-19 pandemic)

Zoom meetings upon request

**Course Description**

This course addresses a comprehensive range of philosophies and theories of adult learning that influence leadership approaches. Issues such as demographics and characteristics of adult learners, motivation, developmental theories, the impact of age on learning, learning styles, and cultural issues are addressed. **Prerequisite Courses:** EDD 809, EDD 802

**Student Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to do the following:

1. Analyze and evaluate classical and emerging philosophies and theories of adult learning.
2. Analyze and evaluate adult learning theories and integrate these with leadership strategies.
3. Understand current literature on brain function as it relates to adult learning and development.
4. Analyze and evaluate motivation theory.
5. Analyze and evaluate ethical implications of learning.
6. Demonstrate application of appropriate APA writing style.

**Canvas Access**

Canvas may be accessed from the SMUMN quicklinks website at <https://www.smumn.edu/quicklinks> or at <https://smumn.instructure.com/>

**Textbook(s)**

1. American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Author.
2. Merriam, S. B., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2020). *Learning in adulthood* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). John Wiley.
3. Additional handouts for supplemental reading will be provided.

### Technical Support

For technical support, contact our help desk at

[tchelpdesk@smumn.edu](mailto:tchelpdesk@smumn.edu)

<http://www2.smumn.edu/helpdesk/>

612-728-5100; option 4, option 1

### University Conduct and Academic Policies

See the course Canvas site for a direct link to all University policies.

### Writing Center and Library Services

See the course Canvas site for direct links to these departments.

### Teaching Methods

A variety of teaching methods will be applied in this course with the intention of creating an active learner-centered environment. These will include class discussions, individual presentations, group work, and additional learning experiences. Students are expected to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate theories and current trends related to the topics as well as to demonstrate academic dialogue and critique. Class discussion is expected to be grounded in the academic literature.

During our class sessions, we will spend time embedding learning through discussion, application, and community inquiry-based learning activities, drafting assignments, and peer reviewing. Collaboration is key to a successful class experience in EDD 811.

I expect all students to come to class prepared to apply their knowledge from the pre-class learning activities. This class features a lot of ambiguity—it is a learning lab where we will try, fail, learn, and grow together in leadership. We will experiment, get outside of our comfort zones, and have fun. It will be messy, but it will be worth it! The philosophy of this class is to let YOUR leadership, adult education experience, and professional skills shine as much as possible.

**Course Outline & Assignments:** (Tentative—adjustments may become necessary and this is a flexible class in which we will co-create our learning experiences together)

| Date             | Topics/Activities   | Assignments  |
|------------------|---|--|
| Week 1<br>May 3  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduction to class</li> <li>● Living your strengths as an adult education leader</li> </ul>                                 | <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1. None</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <p>1. Identify presenters and facilitators (in class)</p> <p>2. Complete the StrengthsFinder assessment</p> <p>3. Week 1 Discussion (no responses to classmates are required, due May 9 at 11:59 p.m.)</p> |
| Week 2<br>May 10 | <p><i>Learning Objectives 1, 2, 4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The social context of adult learning</li> <li>● Who participates in adult</li> </ul> | <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1. Merriam &amp; Baumgartner, Chapters 1 pp. 1-25, 3 pp. 52-81, and 4 pp. 81-112</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p>   |

|                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
|                   | learning?<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult learning theories</li> </ul>  | 1. Dig deep (if you signed up this week)   |
| Week 3<br>May 17  | <i>Learning Objectives 1, 2, 5, 6</i><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andragogy</li> <li>• Self-directed learning</li> </ul>  | <b>Readings:</b><br>1. Merriam & Baumgartner, Chapters 5-6, pp. 117-165<br><b>Assignments:</b><br>1. Dig deep (if you signed up this week)<br>2. Week 3 discussion board post (initial due on Thursday and two responses due on Sunday, May 23 at 11:59 p.m.)    |
| Week 4<br>May 24  | <i>Learning Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5</i><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformative learning</li> <li>• Experiential learning</li> <li>•</li> </ul>  | <b>Readings:</b><br>1. Merriam & Baumgartner, Chapters 7-8, pp. 166-227.<br><b>Assignments:</b><br>1. Dig deep (if you signed up this week)  |
| Week 5<br>May 31  | <i>No Class</i>   |  |
| Week 6<br>June 7  | <i>Learning Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6</i><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-Western perspectives on learning</li> <li>• Embodied and spiritual adult education</li> </ul>                              | <b>Readings:</b><br>1. Merriam & Baumgartner, Chapters 9-10, pp. 233-289<br><b>Assignments:</b><br>1. Dig deep (if you signed up this week)<br>2. Week 6 discussion board post (initial due on Thursday and two responses due on Sunday, June 13 at 11:59 p.m.)  |
| Week 7<br>June 14 | <i>Learning Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6</i><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postmodernism and adult education</li> <li>• Critical theory and feminist perspectives</li> <li>• Adult development</li> </ul> | <b>Readings:</b><br>1. Merriam & Baumgartner, Chapters 11-12, pp. 290-345<br><b>Assignments:</b><br>1. Dig deep (if you signed up this week)<br>2. Week 7 discussion board post (initial due on Thursday and two responses due on Sunday, June 20 at 11:59 p.m.) |
| Week 8<br>June 21 | <i>Learning Objectives 1, 2, 5, 6</i><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive development, intelligence, and memory</li> </ul>  | <b>Readings:</b><br>1. Merriam et al., Chapters 13-15, pp. 346-458<br><b>Assignments:</b><br>1. Dig deep (if you signed up this week)<br>2. Philosophy of adult education final paper  |

## Synopsis of Assignments

### 1. Discussion Board (Student Learning Objectives 1, 2)

Your task is to participate in a class discussion around weekly readings. Your assignment includes completing one original post by Thursday at 11:59 p.m. and writing two responses to classmates by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Your posts should contain thoughtful, engaging, and critical conversation regarding the course concepts and primary readings.

The vision behind this assignment is to encourage you to engage with other students through interactive methods and by asking provocative questions. Your original responses to the prompts should be a minimum of 1-2 paragraphs and no more than 3-4 paragraphs in length (a paragraph is 7-10 lines, not sentences, of text).

As you analyze and critique the issues addressed in the prompts, please incorporate the knowledge and insights gained from that week's readings or other secondary sources. **Cite secondary sources to earn full points.** Be sure to cite your sources using APA documentation standards.

You are required to respond to two classmates for each reflection (except for the first discussion board in week 1). Your responses should be engaging and scholarly and you should ask your classmates questions to inspire their critical thinking and development.

Throughout these discussions, I would like you to explore and integrate class material into discussions; raise questions based on experience, readings, discussion of concepts presented in course; demonstrate critical thinking; pose questions utilizing concepts presented; demonstrate clear and concise analysis that impacts peer learning; and, facilitate the growth of the community of practice

There are four discussion posts (4 discussions x 25 points = 100 points). These are assigned in weeks 1, 3, 6, and 7.

**Total: 100 points**

### 2. Dig Deeps (Student Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3)

We are going to learn about *several* ideas, authors, theories, historical events, philosophical principles, and facets of the continuously-emerging field of adult education.

For two weeks during the semester, I would like you to pluck *one* topic, idea, concept, author(s), scholarly article, theory, new learning, etc. out of our readings and "dig deeper" by researching more information on the topic. Then, please share what you found out about the topic with the class during our synchronous class time. This is an informal opportunity to guide us on the new learning during class. Consider this an opportunity to "geek out" over a topic, author, idea, event, theory, or philosophy that really appeals to you in terms of continued learning and development.

This is an informal presentation or discussion in which you will guide us on the new learning for **no more than 5 minutes** during our synchronous class meetings. Share a video, show us a website, tell us a story, go into depth about an event, share a journal article....have fun and enjoy the opportunity to engage in more learning about a topic. You can email us links or additional information and then discuss them in class. Help us to learn and understand a concept better so that we can apply it to the

course. You can select the weeks you would like to present your dig deep and it should relate to our readings for that week.

Please be prepared all semester to engage in the class in new and different ways each week—this is exploratory and exciting and it will push you outside of your comfort zone a bit! As a community of learners, that means holding the obligation of replying to your classmates and engaging in their discussion of their dig deeps. To keep others engaged in your dig deep, you may need to ask questions, write follow-up communications, frequently check wikis, etc.

Components of this grade include the following:

- Describe the topic and why you selected it
- Explain what you learned or discovered after further research
- Discuss how the topic connects to our class material
- Share your topic on Monday during our synchronous class time

The assignment has a value of up to **100 points (2 dig deep x 50 points = 100 points)**.

**Due: students will select the date they wish to share a dig deep.**

### **3. Philosophy of Adult Education Paper (Student Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**

Your task is to develop your personal philosophy of adult education by synthesizing, applying, and evaluating a minimum of 5 learning theories, educational philosophies, and concepts discussed in class. The final paper (approximately 5-7 pages excluding references) should be written using APA style and incorporate a minimum of 5 references. The assignment will be graded on the depth of the synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of the adult learning theories.

The following prompts will guide you as you develop your philosophy (you should organize your paper according to the major topics conveyed in each prompt--these are bolded below):

- What is the **purpose of adult education** as it relates to your professional or educational goals? In other words, describe how your knowledge of adult learning theories and philosophies can be best integrated into your professional pathway.
- Define your **personal attitudes, values, and beliefs about adult education** and your role as a teacher/leader in adult education. How will you apply those personal attitudes, values, and beliefs in the adult "classroom?" Consider that "classrooms" mean a variety of diverse venues within which teaching, facilitating, and learning take place.
- What **conditions create the best learning opportunities for adult learners?** How can you actively work within your current or future profession to develop those conditions for adult learners?
- What are your **objectives** as an educator? How will you know when you have accomplished those objectives with your students?
- Analyze the **role of adult learners in your "classroom"** and describe the expectations you have of students? How can you communicate those expectations with students? Upon what theories are those expectations based?
- Provide **3-5 teaching strategies** you will employ that follow accordingly with your philosophy of teaching and your theories about how learning is best achieved for adult learners. Do you perceive that there will be any obstacles to incorporating those strategies in your "classroom?" What factors are necessary to make those strategies easier for you to achieve or facilitate in your classroom?

Please state what you will *never do again* as an instructor and leader with the new knowledge you have gained (e.g., I will never again simply lecture to my students).

- Describe your **future learning and research goals** related to adult learners. Are there particular populations of students you would like to learn more about to better inform your professional practice (e.g., working-class students, students of color, GLBTQ students, etc.)?

The assignment has a value of up to **100 points (1 paper x 100 points = 100 points)**.

**Due: Sunday, June 27**

**APA style conventions are required for all written assignments.**

### Course Evaluation

1. Discussion boards @ 25 X 4 ..... (100 points or 33.33% of total)
2. Dig deeps @ 50 X 2 ..... (100 points or 33.33% of total)
3. Philosophy of adult education paper @ 100 X 1 ..... (100 points or 33.33% of total)

**Total possible points for the course: 300**

- EDD students are assessed for Leadership Competencies in each course.
- The "I" grade (incomplete) will be used for emergencies only.

### Late Assignments

During the pandemic, I do not care if students submit late assignments. Please try to submit them on time and just let me know if you'll be submitting something late.

### Assessment of Student Performance/Grading Policies

#### Graduate Grading Scale

|    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| A  | 90-100% (270-300) |
| B  | 80-89% (240-269)  |
| C  | 70-79% (210-239)  |
| NC | below 70%         |

### Access Services for Students with Disabilities

Saint Mary's University is committed to ensuring that students with documented disabilities have access to equal educational programs and activities at the university. If you have, or believe you may have, a disability that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessments of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please contact Mary Ann McCann, Access Services Coordinator, as early in the semester as possible to arrange a confidential discussion about your need for accommodations.

Email: [mmccann@smumn.edu](mailto:mmccann@smumn.edu)

### Student Ratings of Teaching and Learning

Students are expected to provide feedback about teaching and learning in the course. Check your SMU email near the end of the course for an online rating form that records responses anonymously.

**Instructional Methods**

This course will be taught in a learner-centered approach. You will be expected to participate in dialogues and to offer ideas without fear of being “right or wrong.” The goal of this approach is to allow students to learn from each other as well as from the instructor, the texts, and electronic resources; therefore, students are expected to collaborate with each other on course assignments.

You must be present online for this approach to work. If you are absent and not creating an online presence, you are infringing on your education as well as the education of your educational community by not sharing your perspective. Absence of participation for more than two sessions require consultation with the instructor and program director to determine whether or not the course requirements can be met.

**Expectations of Students:**

1. Learners are expected to stay current on the course (at least three to four times a week or approximately every 48 hours to complete assignments).
2. Learners need access to the Internet to work on the Canvas requirements for the course.
3. Please utilize netiquette procedures for online communication.
4. Other expectations as defined by the community and posted as understanding.

## Rubrics

### Discussion Board Rubric (25 points)

|                          | <b>Exemplary 5 points</b>   | <b>Proficient 4 points</b>  | <b>Needs Improvement 3 points</b>   | <b>Not Evident 0 points</b>   |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Comprehension</b>     | Develops an initial post with an organized, clear point of view or idea using rich and significant detail, including peer-reviewed or scholarly sources | Develops an initial post with a point of view or idea using appropriate detail, including some sources                              | Develops an initial post with a point of view or idea but with some gaps in organization and detail and no sources                    | Does not develop an initial post with an organized point of view or idea or with sources                      |
| <b>Engagement</b>        | Provides relevant and meaningful response posts with clarifying explanation and detail and sources  | Provides relevant response posts with some explanation and detail and sources   | Provides somewhat relevant response posts that are generic with little explanation or detail  | Provides response posts that are generic with little explanation or detail                                    |
| <b>Critical Thinking</b> | Draws insightful conclusions that are thoroughly defended with evidence (e.g., secondary resources) and examples  | Draws informed conclusions that are justified with evidence (e.g., secondary resources)   | Draws logical conclusions   | Does not draw logical conclusions   |
| <b>Writing Mechanics</b> | Initial post and responses are easily understood, clear, and concise using proper APA citation methods where applicable with no errors in citations     | Initial post and responses are easily understood, clear, and concise using proper APA citation methods with few errors in citations | Initial post and responses are understandable using proper citation methods where applicable with a number of errors in APA citations | Initial post and responses are not understandable and do not use proper APA citation methods where applicable |
| <b>Timeliness</b>        | Submits initial post and two responses on time  | Submits initial post on time but not the two responses  | Submits initial post or responses one day late  | Submits initial post or responses two or more days late   |

### Dig Deep Rubric (50 points)



|   | <b>Exemplary 12.5 points</b>  | <b>Proficient 9 points</b>   | <b>Not Evident 0 points</b>   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Topic Selection</b>                    | Describes why the topic was selected using rich and significant detail  | Describes either the topic or why it was selected, but details are missing   | Does not describe why the topic was selected  |
| <b>Explanation and Discovery</b>          | Offers a thorough explanation of new learning achieved through additional exploration and research  | Offers a partial explanation of new learning achieved through additional exploration and research, but details are missing                 | Does not explain new learning or discoveries achieved through additional exploration or research  |
| <b>Connections to Course Materials</b>    | Draws insightful conclusions that are thoroughly defended with evidence (e.g., secondary resources) and clear examples of connections to course materials         | Draws conclusions that are justified with limited evidence regarding connections to course materials                                       | Does not draw connections to course materials   |
| <b>Presentation and Sharing Resources</b> | Presents the dig deep material within the 5 minute guidelines and shares dig deep resources with classmates in an engaging manner (e.g., email, wiki, Google doc) | Presents the dig deep material but goes over the 5 minute guidelines and may not effectively share additional resources in a timely manner | Presents the dig deep material but goes significantly over the 5 minute guidelines and/or does not effectively share additional resources |

|  | <b>Exceeds Baseline Expectations<br/>12.5 points</b>   | <b>Approaches Baseline Expectations<br/>10 points</b>   | <b>Does Not Meet Baseline Expectations<br/>0 points</b>   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Purpose of Adult Education</b>  | Offers a thorough discussion of the purpose of adult education as it relates to professional or educational goals—using clear and robust examples and secondary sources to substantiate claims                           | Offers a limited discussion of the purpose of adult education as it relates to professional or educational goals—using only a few examples or missing topics  | Does not discuss the purpose of adult education as it relates to professional or educational goals: the topic is missing or underdeveloped                                |
| <b>Personal Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs About Teaching in Adult Education</b> | Defines personal attitudes, values, and beliefs about teaching in adult education, including how they will apply those attitudes/values/beliefs in the “classroom.” Uses clear and robust examples and secondary sources | Defines personal attitudes, values, and beliefs about teaching in adult education, including how they will apply those attitudes/values/beliefs in the “classroom,” but details are missing and the section is underdeveloped | Missing some larger take-aways about their personal attitudes, values, and beliefs about teaching in adult education and how those aspects will be applied moving forward |
| <b>Conditions for Optimal Learning Opportunities</b>                             | Discusses the conditions that create the best learning opportunities for adult learners and how they will develop those conditions for adult learners in their field   | Offers a limited discussion of conditions that create the best learning opportunities for adult learners and may not discuss how they will develop those conditions for adult learners in their field                         | Missing some key details about the optimal adult learning conditions and does not describe how they will develop those conditions for learners in the future              |
| <b>Educator Objectives</b>   | Offers a clear discussion of personal objectives as an educator and acknowledges measurement of those objectives   | Offers a limited or underdeveloped discussion of personal objectives as an educator and acknowledges measurement of those objectives in a limited or underdeveloped fashion   | Does not discuss the social personal objectives as an educator and does not acknowledge measurement of those objectives   |
| <b>Role of Adult Learners</b>  | Offers a thorough understanding of the role of adult learners, describe expectations of students, and connects to broader theories of adult learning   | Offers a limited understanding of the role of adult learners, may not describe expectations of students, and does not connect to broader theories of adult learning   | Does not address the role of adult learners, may not describe expectations of students, and does not connect to broader theories of adult learning                        |

|                                    |  |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Teaching Strategies</b>         | Offers 3-5 teaching strategies that connect with prior discussion of adult learning theories and acknowledges obstacles to implementing those strategies. Includes “never do again” statements   | Offers 1-2 teaching strategies that may connect with prior discussion of adult learning theories and acknowledges some obstacles to implementing those strategies. Includes “never do again” statements  | Does not offer 3-5 teaching strategies that connect with prior discussion of adult learning theories and does not acknowledge obstacles to implementing those strategies. Missing “never do again” statements  |
| <b>Learning and Research Goals</b> | Describes future learning and research goals related to adult learners   | Offers a limited discussion of future learning and research goals related to adult learners  | Does not discuss future learning and research goals related to adult learners  |
| <b>Mechanics</b>                   | <p>Submission is free of errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization and is presented in a professional and easy to read format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- uses APA documentation in text (including correct use of page numbers for quotations and use of et al. when appropriate)</li> <li>- cites sources in the references section using APA</li> <li>- utilizes traditional academic formatting</li> <li>- utilizes APA headers</li> <li>- includes 5 secondary resources</li> </ul> | <p>Submission has some errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- occasionally uses APA documentation in text</li> <li>- occasionally cites sources in the references section using APA</li> <li>- utilizes some traditional academic formatting (12 point Times New Roman font, double spacing, correct indentations)</li> <li>- may not utilize APA headers</li> <li>- does not include 5 secondary resources</li> </ul> | <p>Submission has critical errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that prevent understanding of ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does not use APA documentation in text</li> <li>- fails to correctly cite sources in the references section using APA</li> <li>- does not utilize traditional academic formatting (12 point Times New Roman font, double spacing, correct indentations)</li> <li>- does not utilize APA headers</li> <li>- does not include 5 secondary resources</li> </ul> |