Adult Learning and Development

Dr. Kieran Scott
Fordham University, GSRRE

Fall 2015
Thursday; 5:00pm-6:50pm
Class begins September 3, 2015.

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Course Description

This course examines key issues in the religious education of adults. It situates adult religious education within the broader framework of adult education theory, principles of practice and the application of this theory to the contexts of faith communities. Foundational issues explored will include the meanings of adulthood, adult learning and development, and adult social worlds. The course offers a vision of educational forms and programs for the religious education of adults and guides students in the design and evaluation of these forms and programs for religious communities.

Objectives

• To critically examine the structural gulf and divide with regard to the religious education of adults in our churches, synagogues, mosques and public life.
• To situate the religious education of adults within our current late modern social and cultural context.
• To problematize the reductionist meanings of adult learning and propose a deeper and wider meaning.
• To critically explore the assumptions and operating promises of the secular field of adult education.
• To examine theories of transformational learning: strengths and limitations.
• To propose an alternative framework for the religious education of adults.
• To design and trace the stages in the process of program planning of the religious education of adults.

Required Texts


5. A course pack is available on e-reserve with assigned readings ©
Recommended Texts

Stephen D. Brookfield, Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning (Jossey-Bass, 1986)

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Class attendance, participation and readings: Engage the assigned readings, active participation in class, contribute to each other’s learning with periodic group work.

2. Interview with an adult learner.
Interview a church or non-church member about his or her learning (via critical incidents, etc) in the context of the church or a non-church setting and submit a five page summary (not a verbatim transcript) of their learning to live religiously based on the interview. See guidelines for interview. Due October 8, 2015. (20% of grade)

3. Reflection paper:
Write 1 reflection papers, (nine pages) on an assigned theme/question. Reflection paper is due Nov. 12, 2015. Paper must demonstrate engagement with assigned readings, class conversation and one’s own experience. (30% of grade).

4. Course Project
Select and complete a course project on some aspect of educational ministry with adults within the framework of the course. Paper should be 15 pages. Prior approval needed. See attached form. Project is due December 10, 2015. (50% of grade). Please include a stamped self-addressed envelope with your final paper.

All written work for the course should demonstrate clear organizational structuring of ideas, thoughtful engagement with assigned reading materials, incorporation of one’s own new learnings and research, with attention to basic grammar, spelling, punctuation and style.

Work submitted after due date will be reduced ½ a grade.

Office Hours: Tuesday: 5pm-7pm
Thursday: 4:00pm-5:00pm;
And by appointment. (Keating 303M)
Office phone: (718)(817-4817)

Home Phone: (973)(310-3621)
(M-Thurs.: 9:00am-5:00pm)

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Notice: Please turn off all cell phones, pagers and tape recorders during class.
Grades
Letter  | Numerical Equivalent |
--------|----------------------|
A       | 4.0 Excellent. Honors-level work |
A-      | 3.7 Still excellent |
B+      | 3.3 Very good. High level of performance |
B       | 3.0 Good. Solid and above average performance |
B-      | 2.7 Good Still above average |
C+      | 2.3 Average level of performance |
C       | 2.0 Satisfactory, acceptable performance |
C-      | 1.7 Minimally acceptable |
F       | 0.0 Failure. Inferior performance |


Course Outline and Readings

I. Introductory Session
   a) Course requirements, objectives, readings
   b) A structural gulf: education in the churches
   c) Bridging the great divide: a renewed commitment


5 John Hull, What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?


7. Dwayne Huebner, “Can Theological Education be Church Education?”Union Seminary Quarterly Review.47, 3-4, 1993:23-38. (handout)


II The Social and Cultural Contexts of Adult Learning and Development: How Social/Contexts Shapes Learning of Adults

a) The social context
b) The cultural context
c) The ecclesial context

2. USCC, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, pp9-12 ®
III. The Purpose of Religiously Educating Adults: Towards What? Why and What They Choose to Learn

a) The meaning of adulthood
b) Education for Paradox: Christian Maturity
c) Christian adulthood

2. Sharan Merriam et al., Learning in Adulthood,”, Chapters 3&16 (R) (req)
5. James Fowler , Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian
12. USCC. Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, pp. 21-24 (R)

IV. The Conceptual Problem of "Adult Education: Adult learning Styles and Principles: how Adults learn: Theories and Models

A) Is Adult Education Unique?

4. Stephen Brookfield, Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning, Chaps. 1-5.
12. Sharan Merriam ed. An Update on Adult Learning Theory, Chaps. 1, 2, 3. (R)

B) Transformative Learning

11. Jane Regan, Toward an Adult Church, Chap. 3
12. S. Merriam,ed. An Update, Chapts. 8 &9. (R)

C. New Approaches to Adult Learning

1. Sharan Merriam et al, Learning in Adulthood, Chapters 8, 9,10,14(req).

V. Multiple Forms of Teaching - Learning in the Adult Years: Where Adults Learn

4. Gabriel Moran, “Four Main Forms of Education”, Religious Education Development ©
6. Maria Harris, Fashion Me a People, Chapts.4-8.
8. James White, Intergenerational Religious Education (REP)
10. Bill Huebsch, Whole Community Catechesis (Twenty-Third)

VI. The Two Faces of Religious Education of Adults: Alternating Currents

a) Conceptual framework: What could be has been and should be the meaning of adult education

1. Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran, “Educating Persons”(R) (cp)
b) Educating Adults to be Religious: Towards Practice


c) Educating Adults in Religion: Towards Understanding

3. Gabriel Moran, “Does Religious Education Belong in a Parish?,” RE as a Second Language Ch.6.(R)

VII. Developmental Journey Toward Adulthood: Psychological, Social and Religious: How Aging Affects Learning Ability

a) Contrasting Images of Development: The Roots of Modern Development
b) Development and Gender
c) Young Adult Faith: Promise and Vulnerability
d) Mid-Life Faith: The Challenges and Potentials
e) Elderhood: The quest for meaning and integrity.
f) Development and Death

2. Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran, Reshaping, Ch.4 & 5.
15. Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran, “Development and Death,” Reshaping, Ch.6.
17. Jane Regan, Toward an Adult Church, Chap.2.
19. Henry Simmons, Soulful Aging: Ministry Through the Stages of Adulthood.

VIII. Program Planning, Design and Evaluation of Practice of Religious Education of Adults

a) Stages in the planning of adult religious education.
b) Designing a process using a program planning model.
c) Distinguishing levels of evaluation.

4. R.E.Y. Wickett, Models of Adult Religious Education Practice, Ch. 7 & 8 (R).
8. Jane Regan, Toward an Adult Church, Chaps. 5-7., especially Chap. 5

Resources
Tom Zanzig and Shirley Kilter (eds), Adult Faith Formation Strategies (Madison, WI: Metanoia Resources, 2006).

USCCB, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (2006).