





Master of Education in Open, Digital, and Distance Education (MDDE) 612

Experiential Learning (Revision 1)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

[Grouped study](#) 

Credits:

3

Area of study:

Distance Education

Prerequisites:

None

Precluded:

None

Faculty:

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Notes:

MEd program students must complete MDDE601 & MDDE602 prior to all other courses.

Early access to the Moodle Learning Management System begins a few days before the official start date of your course. At that time you will have limited course access.

Availability: Normally, Spring Term Only

Overview

This course will introduce students to experiential learning (EL), defined as learning through reflecting on learning. Kolb's model, including learning styles, is studied and critiqued. Students will additionally be familiarized with the professional learning theories of Schon and Lave and Wenger (reflective learning, communities of practice and situated learning). The application of EL for student and professional/workplace learning is introduced through an understanding of reflective journals, communities of practice and learning portfolios. Students will explore the further application of EL in their individual contexts. EL will be examined and critiqued in terms of its gaps in considering race, class, gender and indigenization. Students will practice the use of reflective journals. The final assignment focuses students on EL in their own contexts. Students are encouraged to keep up with the reading, as it the readings and discussion that will build understanding of the course concepts.

Outline

The course is divided into three units.

- **Unit One: The Theory of Experiential Learning (EL)** provides introduction to Kolb's theory of experiential learning. In this unit, we will learn to differentiate between 'experience' and 'learning' and 'experiential learning' (EL) as distinct type of learning. We will overview the foundations of EL theory, Kolb's update of his theory and critiques of EL theory. This unit also introduces us to the concept of reflection in the way we will use it this course and in the final portfolio for the program as well. Based on the work of Ellen Rose, we'll explore what it means to think deeply and meaningfully and practice that in the first journal entry.
- **Unit Two: Reflective Learning and Communities of Practice** focuses on reflective learning. We will further dive into Rose's book as well as overview of the work of Wenger and Lave on communities of practice. We'll touch on using reflection in our own teaching and professional.

- **Unit Three: Experiential Learning Applied** further applies EL, introducing Prior Learning and Assessment (PLAR), learning portfolios, internships/coops and workplace learning. While some readings are provided, you are expected to research additional articles relevant to their own professional contexts. Experiential learning, particularly as it relates to professional and workplace learning, has been criticized for not addressing issues of race, class, gender and indigenization. The idea of critical pedagogy in EL will be introduced here; you will be expected to address such issues in your own context in the final paper.

Learning outcomes

- Define experiential learning in its various forms;
- Describe and analyse experiential learning theories;
- Practice the use of reflective journals for learning and within their own professional practice;
- Articulate how issues of class, race and gender figure into current models of experiential learning, and how experiential learning might be indigenized; and
- Analyse and apply experiential learning within their own professional context.

Evaluation

Activity	Weight
Paper One: Students will be required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of EL theory and the field of EL as presented in the course readings and in additional readings they do on EL in their particular contexts/areas of interest.	20%
Five Reflective Journal Entries: The reflective journal is an important learning tool in this course and one that will hopefully be carried into student's professional practice. It is intended to help students do the following with course concepts and reading: observe, sift, sort and grab onto ideas; learn and connect course content to practice; become better	25%

Activity	Weight
writers and clearer thinkers; reflect critically on issues raised in course readings and students' own practice; and recognize, analyse and reflect on assumptions and beliefs related to experiential learning.	
Weekly Discussion Forums: The course will have eleven discussion forums (except for Week 12 to allow time to focus on the final paper). These discussions questions are framed to help you to think about your final paper.	25%
Final Paper: Students will write about one of the following topics: (a) case study of experiential learning applied within their professional context, or (b) an analysis of an issue/gap in their workplace or practice to which an experiential learning solution might be applied.	30%
Total	100%

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Rose, Ellen. 2013. On Reflection. Toronto : Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.

Other Materials

Online Study Guide and Readings

Important links

› [Course schedule](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Updated February 5, 2025
