



Course Information

Prefix & number	Title
EDST 514	Adult Education Program Planning Theory
Instructor	Prerequisites or restrictions (if any)
T. Sork	None

Focus or Content

Program planning is a pervasive process in adult education. If we regard education as the provision of systematic or organized learning experiences, then it can be argued that program planning is at the core of adult education practice. It is hard to imagine what the landscape of adult education would look like if practitioners were not engaged in program planning. A **program** is an arrangement of activities and experiences designed to promote adult learning, but a program is much more than instruction. Programs may be single events or an elaborate series of related events; they may last an hour or last for years; they may be highly structured or fluid; and may be institutionally-based or community-based.

Planning is a complex process that substantially influences and is influenced by the context in which it occurs. Planning is also a social process so it is influenced by the same social, cultural, political and economic factors that influence other human social endeavours. Planning is fundamentally about attempting to shape and control events in the future. We plan because we want to increase the chances that what we—and others—want to happen does happen. The degree to which this is *possible* and *desirable* is a debatable issue because control over the future is elusive. Of greater interest, however, are the ways of thinking about planning that have been developed and the degree to which these are useful for both understanding and engaging in planning.

Although it is possible to learn how to plan programs without a thorough understanding of the theoretical, conceptual, and philosophical perspectives which undergird practice, this course will emphasize the development of such understanding and the important relationship between theory and practice.

The purpose of this course, then, is to provide an opportunity to study the process of program planning from theoretical, conceptual, and philosophical perspectives with the intent of promoting more informed, insightful and reflective practice.

Goals, Objectives or Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the historical evolution of planning theory and its current state of development within adult education in North America and elsewhere.

2. Identify the key theorists in program planning and the unique contributions made by each to our understanding of practice.
3. Explain the distinguishing characteristics of various “paradigms of planning,” their relative merits, and why there is continuing disenchantment with exclusively technical-rational perspectives.
4. Explain the assumptions, key concepts, dominant metaphors and social processes embedded in at least four planning “models” or “frameworks” and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each in relation to the purpose it was intended to achieve and the context(s) for which it was designed.
5. Describe common technical, social-political and ethical issues related to program planning and explain and justify how you would respond to each.
6. Articulate a way of thinking about program planning that is consistent with your personal philosophy, is compatible with the context in which you work—or hope to work—is adaptable to the variety of planning situations you are likely to face, and is defensible from a moral-ethical viewpoint.

Assignments or Assessment Process

Every student in EDST 514 will be writing *analytical essays* and/or *papers/projects* and will be a member of an *inquiry group*. You will be able to choose whether you wish to write two short *analytical essays* or a longer *paper or project*, but everyone will write an initial *reflective essay* and be a member of an *inquiry group* which will study and make a presentation on a particular planning model, framework or perspective. Participation in learning activities—in class and in Canvas—will also count toward the final mark. These tentative assignments are subject to change. The full course syllabus will describe the final versions of assignments.

Notes/Other

The Summer, 2022, version of this course is scheduled to meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30-7:30pm in Ponderosa Commons North (classroom to be confirmed). There is no textbook required for this course; whenever possible, readings will be made available in Canvas supplemented by materials in the Education Library Reserve collection.