

Syllabus for ADLT 642

Design Challenges in Creating eLearning for Adults

(note: third course in the three-course Teaching and Learning with Technology elective track in the M.Ed. in Adult Learning program)

Professor Information

Instructor's Name
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Course Description:

Prerequisite: ADLT 640, Theory and Practice of eLearning Integration in Adult Learning Environments.

Prerequisite: ADLT 641, Exploration of Digital Media for Adult Learners.

Note: This is a hybrid online class.

ADLT 642 is intended to enhance knowledge and skills in the design and delivery of eLearning content for adult learners. eLearning content includes hybrid, or “blended” learning, online courses and learning modules, and face-to-face classes that integrate technology . Creation of successful eLearning requires skills in designing interactive environments that engage and stimulate as well as provide a sense of community among learners and between learners and the teacher or facilitator. This is much more than the electronic linking of documents and resources. It involves developing content that, depending on the learning objectives, may include the integration of technologies such as digital audio and/or video, animation, social networking tools, virtual worlds, screen capture software, digital images, collaborative document editing, as well as linked content.

This course provides students with a space to apply the knowledge they acquired in the three course sequence in the Teaching and Learning with Technology track by developing their own eLearning projects, giving them the opportunity to address many of the common challenges encountered in the design of eLearning for adults. The class is divided into two distinct sections. During the first half of the course, students will conduct critical evaluations of specific cases of eLearning curricula that have been designed for adult populations in a variety of settings, including online courses, hybrid courses, and face-to-face courses that integrate eLearning. During the second half of the course, students will propose, plan, and develop a major eLearning project of their own, as well as develop evaluation strategies to assess the pedagogical effectiveness of their project.

ADLT 640, Theory and Practice of eLearning Integration into Adult Learning Environments, and ADLT 641, Exploration of Digital Media for Adult Learning, are required pre-requisites.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, the learner will have:

1. Applied principles of eLearning theory and practice to critically evaluate examples of eLearning activities, instructional units, and courses in various settings and recommended ways to make the eLearning more effective.
2. Applied knowledge and use of digital media to develop course content, including evaluation strategies.
3. Proposed, planned, and developed a comprehensive and effective eLearning project.
4. Formally presented their eLearning project and assessment plan to the class.
5. Demonstrated effective eLearning design through the completion of a comprehensive written synthesis of learning in the course.

Textbooks:

Smith, Robin. *Conquering the content: A step-by-step guide to online course design*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Palloff, R. M. & Pratt, K. (2009). *Assessing the online learner: resources and strategies for faculty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Course Topics

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

- Design challenges in eLearning: What to expect
- Overview of the course, readings, and assignments
- Determination of peer groups for case study evaluation

Week 2: eLearning Case Evaluation: The Technology-Infused Classroom

- Small group discussions / recommendations
- Class discussion
- Evaluation rubric
- Key learning points from assigned readings

Week 3: eLearning Case Evaluation: The Blended Course

- Small group discussions / recommendations
- Class discussion
- Evaluation rubric
- Key learning points from assigned readings

Week 4: eLearning Case Evaluation: The Online Synchronous Course

- Small group discussions / recommendations
- Class discussion
- Evaluation rubric
- Key learning points from assigned readings

Week 5: eLearning Case Evaluation: The Online Asynchronous Course

- Small group discussions / recommendations
- Class discussion
- Evaluation rubric
- Key learning points from assigned readings

Week 6: Individual Design Project Proposals

- Individual presentations of project proposals
- Key learning points from assigned readings
- Development of peer evaluation criteria for project presentations

Week 7: Presentation of Project Outline

- Small group discussion and feedback
- In-class design time / instructor commentary and feedback

Week 8: Presentation of Project Draft

- Small group discussion and feedback
- In-class design time / instructor commentary and feedback

Weeks 9 - 12: Presentation of Project Progress

- Small group discussion and feedback
- In-class design time / instructor commentary and feedback

Weeks 13, 14, and 15: Final Presentations of Projects

- Peer evaluations of projects presented
- Group discussion of lessons learned

Description of Graded Work

Expectations for Participation / Attendance/ Engagement (15% of grade)

To get the most from the collaborative nature of our work in this class, you need to be here each week, prepared to enter into dialogue with others by having completed the reading assignments, and ready to share your ideas. Excessive absences or tardiness will result in lowering your participation grade and may affect your overall class grade, as well. You are expected to make substantial progress on your project each week so that you can provide an update on what you have accomplished, as well as the design challenges experienced.

Assignment # 1 – Weekly Reflective Blog Entries (15% of Grade)

You should use your blog to record your thoughts and reactions on what you have read and what we have discussed in class each week. Regular blog entries are the best way to deepen your understanding of eLearning design and its applicability to your professional practice. Reading others' blogs and exchanging comments is an ideal way to engage in a community of practice by challenging your thinking with the perspectives of others. Please note that the CONTENT of your blog will not be graded but your active engagement in learning through reflective practice will be. At a minimum, you should have 10 to 12 substantive blog posts throughout the semester.

Assignment # 2 - Critiques of eLearning Cases (5% for each case; 20% total grade)

During the first four weeks of class, students will be assigned examples of different modes of eLearning course design to assess for effectiveness and pedagogical qualities. These will correspond to text-assigned readings and handouts. Each week the student should come to class prepared to engage in small group discussion with his/her peers having read the case and prepared a 2 to 3 page written analysis according to the following criteria:

- What design factors are incorporated into this case example?
- What design elements are missing that you believe should be incorporated, and why?
- To what extent can you observe community building strategies that foster development of social presence?
- How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment strategies included?
- If you were to re-design this example, what would you recommend, and why?

Assignment # 3 - Development of an eLearning Project (50% of grade)

By week 6 of the course, each student should prepare and bring to class a 2 to 3 paragraph summary of a proposed course design (or redesign of a course currently taught in a face-to-face format) to develop in an eLearning format. Come prepared to discuss your project plan and accept the feedback and commentary of others in class as you formulate your design ideas. The remainder of the course will be devoted to your project development. We will be meeting in one of the computer labs for Weeks 7 through 12. Each week you are expected to report out on your design and development progress and work with a small group of peers for feedback to explore design strategies. Course designs will be presented as final projects during weeks 13, 14, and 15. This is your major assignment of the course. You will be provided with a rubric for grading the assignment, and a list of design elements that should be included in the project.

Assignment # 4 – Final Written Paper Assignment : a Synthesis of My Learning about Design Challenges in eLearning (15%)

As the final written assignment for the class, you should post an essay to your blog entitled “What I’ve Learned about Designing eLearning.” This is intended to be a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of your experience in the course and should address the challenges

you've encountered, what you learned from them, and how you will go about eLearning design in the future based on this experience. If you have made regular and frequent reflective journal entries to your blog, these will be an excellent resource for this final essay. While there is no assigned length to this essay, it should be sufficient to capture and organize your learning during the semester, including how your thinking has changed or developed and how you intend to use what you have learned.

Consider composing your draft in Word before posting it to the blog to avoid the chance of losing your work if the computer "hiccups" while you are composing your post. Once these essays are posted to the blog, you are encouraged to read and exchange comments with your peers on each others' work.

Supplementary Bibliography

- Bender, T. (2004). *Discussion-Based Online Teaching to Enhance Student Learning: Theory, Practice and Assessment*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Bonk, C. J. & Zhang, K. (2008). *Empowering online learning: 100+ activities for reading, reflecting, displaying, and doing*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L. & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.). (2000). *How people learn: brain, mind, experience, and school*. National Academies Press. National Research Council: Washington, DC.
- Brown, J. S. (1999). *Learning, working and playing in the digital age*. Presentation at the Conference on Higher Education of the *American Association for Higher Education*. Accessed March 28, 2009 from http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/sci_edu/seelybrown/seelybrown.html.
- Caffarella, R. S. (2002). *Planning programs for adult learners: A practical guide for educators, trainers, and staff developers*. (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Conrad, R. & Donaldson, J. A. (2004). *Engaging the online learner: Activities and resources for creative instruction*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Finkelstein, J. E. (2006). *Learning in real time: Synchronous teaching and learning online*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Garrison, D. R. & Vaughan, N. D. (2008). *Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palloff, R. M. & Pratt, K. (2004). *Collaborating online: Learning together in community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Richardson, W. (2008). *Blogs, Wikis, podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Evaluation and Assessment

Written papers and presentations will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Is information presented clearly and concisely?
- Is knowledge of the subject demonstrated?
- Does the paper represent a review of related literature from a variety of sources?
- Does the paper take a critical approach, suggesting implications for adult learning?
- Are grammar, spelling, punctuation, and APA style used correctly?
- Was the paper / blog post submitted on time?

Grading Scale

<p>A 90-100</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed at graduate level of excellence on all fronts. • Participated actively in class discussions and activities, appropriately referencing credible resources from class/external readings and introducing personal/anecdotal/experiential comments that contributed to a heightened awareness of the topic under discussion. • Engaged in scholarly debate with others. • Made substantial contributions to completion of an excellent group project and project presentation. • Submitted <i>timely</i>, impeccable and well-written documents/papers related to assignments.
<p>B 80 - 89</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed at graduate level on most fronts, but did not rise to the level of excellence in all areas. • Participated actively in class discussions and activities, but with less displayed familiarity with the literature (class and external readings). • Made ample contributions to completion of an excellent group project and project presentation. • Submitted well-written documents/papers related to assignments that contained only minor errors/problems.
<p>C 70-79</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in class discussions and activities on a limited basis or did so from an uninformed/personal perspective only. • Made limited contributions to completion of the group project, or group project was of average quality. • Submitted written documents/papers related to assignments that were less than comprehensive, inadequately researched, or inclusive of important grammatical errors.

D 60-69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed in a substandard manner on several assignments. • Made minimal contributions to completion of the group project, or group project was of substandard quality. • Failed to demonstrate a basic understanding of concepts and/or failed to adequately contribute to the class.
F Below 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in academic dishonesty plagiarism, or other Honor Code violations, or • Stopped participating altogether, or • Failed to meet the requirements of the class.

Portfolio Assessment

The requirement for a reflective journal and e-portfolio assessment in the Adult Learning program has evolved to a weblog format. Each student in the program should keep a blog as an ongoing reflective journal; the blog can also be set up to host your “best work” from each class. Near the end of your program, you should schedule a meeting with your faculty advisor to discuss what you have learned during your time in the program through your reflective practice. Prior to your meeting with your advisor, you should complete a ten-page, double-spaced, reflective essay on the overall program experience and post it to your blog. Your blog as an e-portfolio can be an asset for job entry and career advancement purposes, much as an artist carries a portfolio of his/her best work to a job interview. It can be useful in preparing for job interviews, and can be added to your resume as an internet link for prospective employers to review.

VCU Student Policies

Email Policy: Electronic mail or "email" is considered an official method for communication at VCU because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, cost effective, and environmentally aware manner. *You are required to use your official VCU email account for email communication in this course.* This policy ensures that all students have access to this important form of communication. It ensures students can be reached through a standardized channel by faculty and other staff of the University as needed. Mail sent to the VCU email address may include notification of University-related actions, including disciplinary action. Please read the policy in its entirety: <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/policies/webemail.html>

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: The *VCU Resource Guide* states: “Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education.

“Therefore, it must act to maintain these values, even to the point of separating from the University those who violate them. [The VCU honor system policy] describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by administrative hearings and appeals. All persons enrolled in any

course or program offered by VCU, and all persons supervising the learning of any student are responsible for acting in accordance with the provisions of this policy.”

The VCU Honor Code: VCU has recently revised its honor policy. Students should review that policy as described in the *VCU Resource Guide*: http://www.provost.vcu.edu/pdfs/Honor_system_policy.pdf

In this class, because coursework will at times be collaborative, particular issues of integrity arise. Students should not copy or print another student’s work without permission. Any material from another source must be credited, whether that material is quoted directly, summarized, or paraphrased. In other words, students should respect the work of others and in no way present it as their own.

Student Conduct in the Classroom: According to the *VCU Resource Guide*,
“The instructional program at VCU is based upon the premise that students enrolled in a class are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other students. Accordingly, in classrooms, laboratories, studies, and other learning areas, students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly and cooperative manner so that the faculty member can proceed with their [sic] customary instruction. Faculty members (including graduate teaching assistants) may set reasonable standards for classroom behavior in order to serve these objectives. If a student believes that the behavior of another student is disruptive, the instructor should be informed.”

In addition, the University Rules and Procedures prohibit anyone from having
“...in his possession any firearm, other weapon, or explosive, regardless of whether a license to possess the same has been issued, without the written authorization of the President of the university...”

Certainly the expectation in this course is that students will attend class with punctuality, proper decorum, required course material, and studious involvement. The *VCU Resource Guide* contains additional important information about a number of other policies with which students should be familiar, including Guidelines on Prohibition of Sexual Harassment, Grade Review Procedure, and Ethics Policy on Computing. It also contains maps, phone numbers, and information about resources available to VCU students. The *VCU Resource Guide* is available online or through the Division of Student Affairs.

See the *VCU Resource Guide* for more information
(<http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/conductguide.html>).

Cell Phones and Beepers: Please be advised that CELL PHONES AND BEEPERS SHOULD BE TURNED OFF or set to vibrate status while in the classroom.

Students with Disabilities: *SECTION 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require that VCU provide an “academic adjustment” and/or a “reasonable accommodation” to any individual who advises us of a physical and/or mental disability. If you have a physical or mental limitation that requires an academic adjustment or accommodation, arrange a meeting with me at your earliest convenience. Additionally, if your coursework requires you to work in a lab environment, you should advise the instructor or department chairperson of any concerns you may have regarding safety issues related to your limitation(s). This statement applies not only to this course but also to every other course in this University.*

Religious Observances: It is the policy of VCU to accord students, on an individual basis, the opportunity to observe their traditional religious holidays. Students desiring to observe a religious

holiday of special importance must provide advance written notification to the instructor by the end of the second week of classes.

Emergency Preparation:

What to know and do to be prepared for emergencies at VCU:

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify>). Keep your information up-to-date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert>).
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.