

Adult learning: Perspectives and Contexts

Programme course

7.5 credits

Adult learning: Perspectives and Contexts

945A02

Valid from:

Determined by
The Board of Educational Science

Date determined
2006-11-28

Main field of study

Adult Learning

Course level

Second cycle

Advancement level

A1X

Course offered for

- Master's Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change

Entry requirements

The course is a part of the Intercontinental Master's Programme Adult learning and Global Change.

Intended learning outcomes

The course will enable students to

- Understand global differences in conditions for adult learning through the elaboration and discussion of own experiences of learning
- Develop understanding of contemporary theories of learning, applied to the area of adult learning, through the analysis and comparison of their central concepts
- Identify, analyse and discuss global dimensions of learning in how diversity or uniformity is depicted on a local level and how this affects the way people live, think and act in local communities.

Course content

This course focuses on contemporary theoretical perspectives on learning and the essence of and mutual relationships between basic concepts within them, such as meaning, context, and experience. It deals with characteristic features of the processes and outcomes of learning beyond the compulsory school system, regardless of whether they take place in higher education, municipal adult education, popular adult education or in workplaces. The significance of various contexts for the content and outcome of learning is emphasised, as well as the significance of varying approaches to learning for the outcome of learning.

Teaching and working methods

The rationale for the working forms in the course is that understanding is promoted through elaboration of experiences that are further subjected to theoretical analyses and discussed in interaction with peers in a global learning community. Students learn when their understanding is challenged in varying ways; through reading, writing, comparison, discussion and application. In the first part of the course, students will start by describing their own context in terms of learning aspects and comment on the contributions of their peers. In the second part of the course, the experiences constitute the backdrop for analyses of contemporary learning theories. Finally, the individual experiences and analyses are collated and analysed between groups of students, identifying global dimensions of learning. On-line communication will be the main interaction between tutors and students as well as between students. The amount of work required for the course corresponds to 20 working hours per week. The course is taught in such a way that the knowledge and experiences of men as well as of women is taken into account and developed.

Examination

The examination comprises of a cluster of activities, including readings, regular and active participation in on-line debates, and individually written assignments. In order to pass, all required tasks as described below must be completed.

- In the first part of the course, the students are requested write a short essay where they describe and analyse their own everyday context in terms of aspects of learning. These texts are then compared and discussed between groups of students in on-line discussions. An essay of maximum 3 pages will be the final task in this section of the course.
- The second part of the examination comprise of an individual essay where the student should describe three contemporary theoretical perspectives on learning, the constructivist/cognitivist perspective, the phenomenographic perspective and the socio-cultural perspective. The description of the theories should be made with regard to their most distinctive features and how the concepts context, meaning, and experience are related to each other within each perspective. The paper should also comprise a comparison between the three perspectives on learning by referring to similarities and differences in how they use and explain these concepts. The essay should comprise of 5-7 pages.
- The third and final assessment task is a group assignment that builds on the two previous tasks. The students should compare their individual essays within their group and make an analysis of the global dimensions of the learning contexts that they share, thereby drawing on the theories that they have been studying. The analysis should result in a group essay comprising maximum 8 pages. The group essays are then subjected to on-line debates between groups of students.

The papers will be evaluated according to the following general and specific criteria:

Criteria on general qualities of written work, i.e. clarity and consciousness of style, structuring of arguments, organisation of material, evidence of critical reading, depth of analysis, explication of assumptions, integration of interpretations.

Criteria related to the specific task, i.e. evidence of reading and use of references from the reading list, ability to discern and formulate assumptions found in the three learning theories, ability to critically analyse and compare the key concepts context, meaning, and experiences within and between the learning theories.

Grades

Three-grade scale, U, G, VG

Other information

Planning and implementation of a course must take its starting point in the wording of the syllabus. The course evaluation included in each course must therefore take up the question how well the course agrees with the syllabus. The course is carried out in such a way that both men's and women's experience and knowledge is made visible and developed.

Department

Institutionen för beteendevetenskap och lärande