Master of Education (MEd) in Adult Learning and Education
– Course Details –

MEd Cohort Program (ALE1) to be offered in partnership with the
Justice Institute of British Columbia
New Westminster, BC

Details

MEd students take three core courses, one research methods course and several electives. Students have the option of completing the program with 30 credits of coursework (10 courses) or completing 27 credits of coursework (9 courses) plus a graduating paper/project (EDST 590) focused on an issue or concern in their field of practice. A minimum of 24 credits must be in graduate courses—500-level and above. Most instruction will be blended with a mix of face-to-face sessions—held at the Justice Institute of British Columbia in New Westminster—and web-based interaction. Specific days and times for class meetings will be set once the membership of the cohort has been confirmed. Instructors will be from UBC’s Adult Learning and Education group who represent diverse specializations, research expertise and practical experience.
Brief Descriptions of Required Courses for ALE1 Cohort

- **EDST 503: Foundations of Adult Learning and Education**
  This course provides an introduction to the field of adult education, including its Canadian roots in community-based education and adult learning in social movements. We will learn about Father Moses Coady and the Antigonish Movement; Alfred Fitzpatrick and Frontier College; Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and bell hooks’ gentle critique of him; Myles Horton and Highlander; adult learning and ecofeminism at Vancouver Island’s Clayoquot Sound. We will learn what comprises the field of adult education; how it is organized institutionally, nonformally and informally; what is its scope, breadth and purpose—what gives it passion and life. We’ll look at some of the terminology floating about in the field: andragogy, transformative learning, self-directed learning, feminist popular theatre. By the end of the course, everyone should have a solid foundation in the field of adult learning and education (hence, the course title), and a better sense of their location within it.

- **EDST 514: Adult Education Program Planning Theory**
  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. 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 these multiple perspectives with the intent of promoting more informed, insightful and reflective practice.

- **EDST 518: Theory and Research on Adult Learning**
  At the heart of all adult education practices is an understanding of adult learning. This course immerses students in some of the learning theories and research. It examines some of the neurological perspectives of learning, self-directed learning, transformative learning, and some attempts at holistic understanding of adult learning. It also explores the embodied, emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning, and some sociocultural and socio-material learning perspectives including communities of practice, cultural historical activity theories, and practice-based learning theories. It further examines the connections between critical theory, postmodernism and feminism and learning, as well as some non-Western perspectives of learning. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to develop a critical appreciation of the theories while attending to how these theories could inform their teaching, learning and other educational or work practices.
• EDUC 500: Research Methodology in Education
This course is designed as a broad introduction to the world of research in general and educational research more specifically. Students will be introduced to major philosophical positions that inform how people and society should be studied/researched. The emphasis is on how key assumptions of quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches help researchers to make theoretically informed decisions about what methods are suitable for practically doing research. Given the diversity of researchable problems in the field of education several research methods are used. The course maps some of the research methods (mainly mixed method, survey, interview, ethnography, discourse analysis, and policy analysis) and strategies used for collecting and analysing data. The course also assists students in becoming critical readers of research.

• EDST 525: Program Evaluation in Adult and Community Education
Evaluation is a rich and constantly evolving field that overlaps with many other social science disciplines such as sociology, psychology, education, community development, business, political science and many more. Similar to some of these other disciplines, evaluation is far more than an academic area of study and research. It takes place in real-world conditions confronting real-world challenges. This course adopts an inductive approach to exploring evaluation, inviting you to examine what evaluation “looks like” in your own context of practice, and working with examples of evaluation from diverse sectors, nations, populations, and disciplines. The overall purpose of this course is to deepen your understanding of evaluation purposes, theories, practices, and challenges, and provide you with practical guidance to mobilize your learning about evaluation beyond the classroom into your professional practice.

• EDST 535: Comparative and International Adult Education
Adult education represents “an enormous field of endeavour” (T. Neville Postlethwaite). It encompasses learning opportunities – whether formal or informal – that extend well beyond schooling, from basic literacy to the promotion of personal fulfillment, and the fostering of lifelong learning competencies and habits. Notwithstanding, defining adult education as a field of practice poses significant challenges. In her book, Adult Education in Neoliberal Times, Marion Bowl (2017) observes that, historically, adult education “has developed in the context of diverse, and sometimes conflicting, social and political ideas” (p. 18). She adds that “[r]ecognition of the notion of adult education as formalised provision is a relatively recent phenomenon. It arose from processes of religious and cultural change, urbanisation, industrialisation and scientific advance as well as colonial expansion – and the struggles against it...” (p. 19). Over the past decades, the shifting meanings attached to adult education – from adult education, to lifelong education, to lifelong learning – further reflect
the cumulative impacts of neoliberal political economies that re-cast education and training as “an individual responsibility and as precondition for economic inclusion” (p. 28). Such shifts – and the dynamics that underpin them – raise questions about who can – or cannot – access and participate in adult education opportunities within different social and national settings. They also compel us to reflect on the purposes of adult education in market-driven economies geared towards the delivery of vocational outcomes. However, the questions surrounding adult education cannot be reduced to the technical acquisition of competencies and of skills required by globalized economies. They necessitate a deeper reflection on the interface between adult education and socioeconomic disparities within and across societies and countries: How does this interface shape the political life of the community and the “geopolitics of knowledge” (Walter Mignolo) that determines the movement of migrant workers and their location within world economies? Within these wider contexts, what does it mean to be an ‘adult educator’, and what does ‘learning’ stand for? How is adult education linked to questions of equity, solidarity, and social justice in diverse and pluralistic societies? This course is designed for those interested in contemporary issues in comparative and international adult education. It introduces select intellectual traditions in adult education. It offers participants an opportunity to critically reflect on theories and methodologies prevalent in this area of research and practice.

- **EDST 565: Special Course in Subject Matter Field—Professional Learning and Work (3 credits)**
  A variety of academic literatures across disciplines focus on professional learning and work. For example, literature in the sociology of professions tends to focus on how professionals are defined, growth in the professional workforce, and how professional work has changed as a result of broader economic changes. A second literature on professional learning focuses on how professionals learn in classrooms as well as practice sites, and how higher education programs can facilitate this learning. A third literature highlights the transformative role of professionals in society. This course exposes students to these different literatures about professional work and learning in order to inform their understandings of the responsibilities of educators in professional programs, while also recognizing the pressures on and limits of professional education.