

Teaching Adults and Teachers of Adults
Online
DF 963Z
Doctor of Ministry Functions Elective

[Stephen D. Lowe](#), Ph.D.
Professor of Christian Education
Erskine Seminary
Three Credits

Welcome to the course, **Teaching Adults**. Although I can't give you a personal welcome, as I might do in my on-campus course, I do want to welcome you warmly to this vital learning experience. I want this course to be a significant and vital part of your seminary education. You are one of many students taking advantage of the alternative delivery of high quality theological education through our EDEN distance learning enterprise. I am available when you need me because we aren't limited by office hours or distance. You can also access course materials and other pertinent information through the EDEN web site located on the seminary web page. I look forward to getting to know you better as we progress through the course materials. Anytime you experience difficulty or have a question about course content or course requirements, please use one of the communication means identified above to reach me. I pray God's wisdom as you expose yourself to the study of his Word.

Dr. Steve Lowe

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church.

CONTACT INFORMATION



Email: slowe@erskine.edu



Phone: 864.379.8748



Fax: 864.379.8887



Mail: P.O. Drawer 668, Due West, SC 29639. Office location: Room 14, Reid Hall



Website:

<http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics/Files/Faculty/SLowe.html>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course focuses on helping pastors and educators improve their teaching of adults in the church through development of skills such as preparing and delivering educationally sound lectures, leading lively discussions, constructing

and posing probing questions, and helping adults to articulate their faith. Special attention is given to the design of training workshops for transferring these skills to teachers of adults in the church.

COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with a comprehensive Biblical framework or paradigm that guides our understanding of the Biblical principles of religious education as contained in the Hebrew Old Testament and the Christian New Testament.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be introduced to the concept of adult development and the impact such development may have on teaching adults in the church.
2. Students will acquire a basic working knowledge of adult learning theory and how adults learn.
3. Students will acquire a basic working knowledge of adult teaching theory and how best to teach adults.
4. Students will develop appropriate skills for facilitating adult learning and improving one's teaching of adult learners in the Church.
5. Students will learn how to design instruction (workshops and seminars) for teachers of adults and to practice providing that instruction in an educational setting similar to what one might experience in a Church education ministry.

COURSE RESOURCES

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

You may be able to use Erskine Seminary's Virtual Bookstore at www.ecampus.com/erskine to order your textbooks for this course. Please click the "Shop by Course" link to see if the books required for this course are listed under the courses shown. If they are not available on ecampus, you may order them from other online book distributors.

Taking Learning to Task: Creative Strategies for Teaching Adults, Jane Vella. Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Making Sense of Adult Learning, Dorothy Mackeracher. University of Toronto Press, 2004.

Growth and Development Through the Lifespan, Kathleen Thies. Delmar Learning, 2001 (Quick Look Nursing Series).

Purchase either:

How To Run Seminars and Workshops: Presentation Skills for Consultants, Trainers, and Teachers, Robert L. Jolles. John Wiley and Sons, 2001.

Or

Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Workshops by Larry Nolan Davis, 1974.

Or you can locate any other book written on this subject. There are several that have been written in the past but they are out of print. If you find one of these and want to use that as your resource, you have that option.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS FAQ's

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachment (unless otherwise notified).
2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number.

COURSE PLATFORM

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, "Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program." It is with this stipulation that EDEN has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, "Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities." You will be provided with additional information concerning Moodle tutorials, site information, and the peer mentoring program. In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- High-speed access to the Internet

COURSE COMPONENTS

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through three learning components:

1. **Collaborative Component:** This dimension of adult teaching and learning will be experienced through your online participation in the Going Deeper sections for each month.

2. **Reading Component:** Exposure to the literature of the field relevant to the topic of this course will be accomplished through required readings as specified in this course syllabus.
3. **Application Component:** Your final exam for this course will be the production of a workshop.

These components will provide a well-rounded learning experience for the thoughtful and diligent student producing a time commitment of approximately 120 contact hours to complete the course.

Please Note: Successful completion of this distance learning course will require that you set your own schedule and discipline yourself to stay on schedule. If you are taking this course in Summer Term you will need to adjust the due dates to conform to the beginning and ending dates for Summer Term set by the seminary catalog.

COURSE GRADING SCALE AND CRITERIA

Students always need to know what the professor expects of them in any course. This is especially true in distance learning courses.

Each student enrolled in the class will automatically be given an “A” grade at the beginning of the course. The only way a student cannot achieve a grade of “A” is by not participating in the course learning experiences and not achieving an “A” level. Students are expected to participate in the class at the “A” level description offered below. It is expected that all student projects and assignments will be performed at the “A” level as described below. When, in the estimation of the professor, the student does not perform at the contracted “A” level, the student must re-submit the work until it achieves an “A” level. Students have the option of contracting for a lower grade that involves less work.

A Level Work = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.

B Level Work = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.

C Level Work = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.

D Level Work = Inadequate mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

Grade Scale

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C		
92-91	B+	79-78	C-	69-0	F
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

Written Work

In general, please consult the [seminary style manual](#) located on the seminary web page and also included as a part of the student handbook. All written submissions should be edited for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and style format prior to submission. All written submissions will be graded on the basis of these elements in addition to content.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Online Component

The learning environment for this course will be built upon the assumptions of adult learning theory as espoused in the andragogical model of Dr. Malcolm Knowles and upon the biblical/theological premise of the priesthood of all believers. In practice, this means that the course will be highly interactive, collaborative, and participatory. This dimension of adult teaching and learning will be experienced through your online participation in the "Depot" forums for each month.

- You are expected to respond to others' Reaction papers posted in the online classroom for this course.

Applied Adult Teaching Philosophy

Benjamin Bloom, a leading educational theorist and researcher for the last forty years, asserts in his model of mastery learning that "Most students (perhaps over 90 percent) can master what we have to teach them, and it is the task of instruction to find the means which will enable our students to master the subject under consideration" ("Learning for Mastery," 1981:153). The aim of good instruction should be to facilitate maximum student learning and comprehension. With this approach to adult learning in mind, all students will be allowed to re-

submit written assignments until the expected grade is achieved. All previously graded submissions must accompany any new re-submission.

Module # 1 – Adult Growth and Development

Articles

- Read the articles and PowerPoint presentations located in the Module I section of the online classroom. Write a one paragraph reaction in the Response to Reading Depot section of Module I.

Book Review

- Read *Growth and Development in the Lifespan* and write a one page (single spaced) summary of what you consider to be the key concepts of adult learning.
- Each concept should have a brief paragraph explaining its role in adult learning and its implication for teaching adults. Be sure to include both components in your paper.
- Send me one copy as an email attachment and upload another copy to the online classroom in the Adult Development Depot section of the online classroom. Directions for how to do this are provided below*. In addition to writing your own summary you are also to read the summary of one other student whether taking the course with you or archived from a previous class. ***Due at the end of the first month of class.***

*Steps to upload your assignment:

1. Find the “Depot” discussion forum in the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find assignment listed there.
3. Click on “Add a new discussion topic” and this will take you to the upload area
4. Type in your name and reaction paper title (i.e. Joe Smith’s Paper) in the subject line.
5. Type a BRIEF explanation in the message section (i.e. Memo)
6. Click on the “browse” feature at the bottom of that paper and find your paper.
7. Double-click on your document and select “post to forum” shown at the bottom of the screen.

Steps to download (or read) others’ assignment:

1. Find the “Memo Depot” discussion forum in the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find student postings listed there.
3. Click on the title of the student posting listed under Discussion.
4. Click on the Word document in that posting.
5. Select “open” to read the document instantly or “save” to save the document to your desktop folder.
6. Post your comments related to the paper by hitting “reply” on the discussion board. Enter your comments in message section. Hit “post to forum” when finished.

Module # 2 – Adult Teaching

Articles

- Read the articles in the online classroom about Adult Teaching and Learning.

- Write a one paragraph reaction in the Response to Reading Depot section of Module I.

Book Review

- Read *Taking Learning to Task*.
- Write a two page summary (single spaced) of ways in which you might use Vella's teaching tasks approach for a group of adult learners in your church. Think in terms of a specific subject or topic that you might want to teach, as well as a specific group of adult learners. Describe the group and explain the subject matter you will be teaching. Then elaborate on how you plan to use Vella's technique with this group teaching this subject.
- Send me one copy as an email attachment and upload another copy to the online classroom in the Adult Teaching Depot section of the online classroom. Directions for how to do this are provided in the online classroom. In addition to writing your own summary you are also to read the summary of one other student whether taking the course with you or archived from a previous class. ***Due at the end of the 2nd month.***

Module # 3 – Workshop Design

- Read *How To Run Seminars and Workshops*, or one of the other recommended texts or your own similar text.
- Based upon this text, the other texts that you have read prior to this one, and the lecture/course materials you have studied in the course, design a half-day workshop entitled "How to Teach Adults in the Church." Your workshop design should give evidence of the fact that you have mastered the course material regarding adult development, adult learning, and adult teaching, as well as the practical suggestions contained in the seminars and workshops text that you have selected.
- You can decide what you will do in the three hours set aside for this event to be held in your church. However, you must be able to offer an adult education rationale for everything you include. This rationale should be included in your submitted work.
- Send me one copy as an email attachment and upload another copy to the online classroom in the Church Workshop Depot section of the online classroom. In addition to writing your own summary you are also to read the summary of one other student whether taking the course with you or archived from a previous class. ***Due at the end of the 3rd month.***

Module # 4 - Workshop

- The final requirement for this course will be actually putting on the workshop you designed in Module # 4 above (*if you cannot conduct an actual workshop, you may video/audio-tape a mock event*). You may either audio or video tape the event and provide a copy to me for evaluation. Please provide me either a cassette tape or a VCR tape or a DVD containing your workshop from beginning to end. This means you will be responsible for making

arrangements to have the final event taped and you are responsible for the quality of the finished product. **Part of your grade will be based upon the quality of the audio or video recording.**

- Another part of your grade will be based upon how effectively you use the adult education knowledge provided in the course. The size of the group is not important but you will need enough participants to be able to do what you have planned in Module # 3 above. Therefore, you should design your workshop with a specific number of participants in mind. See this as an opportunity to “kill two birds with one stone.”
- The event will count as your final exam for the course but it may also provide an invaluable resource and learning experience for the members of your church or folks from surrounding churches who are invited to the event. Your denomination may wish to sponsor the event and invite churches from your district or presbytery. You may conduct the workshop anytime during the last month of the course at a time and place that is convenient for you. I am available to assist you in any way as you design and carry out this project.
Due at the end of the semester.

Courses taken through Erskine’s Distance Education Network are self-directed and self-paced within the parameters of the semester in which you enroll for the course. The time constraints of this course are self-imposed to a large degree. However, keep in mind that if you are working toward degree completion you may be bound by a time frame imposed by Seminary policy. Consult your catalog for specific time frames in your degree program. Some variation in time required to complete an assignment is to be expected due to a variety of factors, not the least of which is your own self-discipline.

RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL AND CLASS POLICIES

Conduct in Theological Discussions

Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.

POLICIES

1. Language about God and Humanity

Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church’s historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students

are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

2. From the Seminary Catalog, "the grade of 'I' or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" normally is given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing all course requirements. If a grade of "I" is given for a course the remaining course work must be submitted for grading prior to the final date established in the current Seminary Catalog. Otherwise, the grade of "I" automatically becomes a grade of "F." Note that there is a fee associated with an "Incomplete" grade.

3. Any late project will be automatically reduced by one letter grade regardless of reason. *Please make this class a high priority and keep ahead of projects in order to compensate for the exigencies of ministry and life.*

4. Seminary policy regarding drop/adds. I understand that once I have completed, signed, and submitted my registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a BINDING CONTRACT, and my billing will be based on this registration. I further understand if I decide not to take this class, a "drop/add" form must be completed, including securing appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.

5. My normal office hours are posted on my office door for each semester. However, there are times when I will not be in my office during those posted hours. If you need to see me or speak with me, please send me an email (slowe@erskine.edu) or leave me a voice mail on my office phone (864.379.8748).

6. Christian Education is a hybrid of the fields of Education and Theology. Typically theologians prefer the Turabian or footnote style of citation. Educators as well as others in the social sciences prefer the American Psychological Association (APA) in-text citation style. The Seminary allows either at the graduate level. I allow students who use either style in my classes. My only requirement is that you do not mix the two citation styles. Choose either APA (my preference) or Turabian (the Seminary's preference).

7. Plagiarism, defined as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, is a clear violation of the Erskine Seminary Honor Code as set forth in the [Student Handbook](#) and *Seminary Catalog*. It is also a clear violation of the will of God in regard to taking something that belongs to someone else without his/her permission. The penalty for an infraction of the plagiarism policy is severe and may potentially result in the permanent dismissal of a student from the seminary. If you have

any questions concerning the appropriate use of referenced sources, please contact me prior to submitting your work for grading.

WRITING THEOLOGICAL PAPERS

The seminary has produced a *Writing Theological Papers* document that guides a student through the process of producing a high quality theological paper. It is included as part of the materials for this course located in the online classroom and is part of your Student Handbook provided by the seminary.

Please edit your paper for typographical errors, misspelled words, stylistic miscues, and grammatical mistakes. The paper should be double-spaced and constitute original work written for this course only and cannot include material previously used in another course or for another purpose. Please read over the notation regarding the seminary policy on plagiarism included at the end of this syllabus. Your use of the work or thoughts of another without proper citation and acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism. **Content found at an Internet web site is construed to be copyrighted material written and produced by another person.** Undocumented wholesale use of words from an Internet web site passed off as the student's own work in a research paper of this sort constitutes plagiarism and will be considered a violation of the seminary plagiarism policy. Students who are determined to have violated the seminary's policy on plagiarism will receive a grade of zero for the paper, will not be allowed to re-submit another paper, and will have a written record of the violation added to their permanent student record. Further violations of the seminary's plagiarism policy could result in temporary or permanent dismissal from the seminary.

Please visit these websites for more information about plagiarism:

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

<http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html>

Sample Memo to Myself

Memo to Myself: You Are My Witnesses

On the road to Emmaus—and elsewhere during his earthly ministry—Jesus taught of himself from the Old Testament Scriptures. “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me.’ And he opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Lk. 24:44-45). Those he taught did likewise, Peter and Paul and others preaching of Christ consistently from the Law and the Prophets (e.g., Acts 2:14ff.; Rom. 1:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:3,4). Jesus affirmed the integrity of the Scriptures: “the Scripture,” he says in the singular, “cannot be broken” (Jn. 10:35). And this is the affirmation, of the unity and integrity of the whole Bible, that I find most pointedly underscored in You Are My Witnesses.

Early in our study we noted the importance of teaching both GOD's Word and his world, of integrating faith and learning, of teaching the whole counsel of GOD, even the parts we might not particularly care for or understand. This text highlights for me the historic significance of that mandate; that is, it has always been GOD's plan to integrate, to relate rather than to separate. The first part of the text shows clearly how GOD fully intended for Israel to know him and to make him known to all of creation—one Creator, who is one, for all that he has made. The very concept of covenant is relational and integrative, and this has been GOD's idea from the first.

From the first, too, GOD has unfolded his revelation through a vital dynamic, a witness at once internal to his chosen people and external through them to "all the nations." You Are My Witnesses makes especially clear the ongoing nature of such a dynamic—between old Israel and new, between witness to GOD's words and deeds, between verbal and visual witness. I particularly appreciate the sharp distinction drawn in the New Testament sections between preaching and teaching for conversion to the faith and the more extended teaching task of "nurturing the churches." The text's greatest strength may be the depth and breadth of its lexical grounding, especially rich and revealing in these sections.

The chapter on Acts closes with a ringing call to strike a crucial balance between all sorts of opposites that challenge the contemporary church (121-22). A striking portrait of just such balance is Luke's project in the Book of Acts. Witnesses offers a compelling reading of Luke/Acts, one which may prove fruitful for today's imbalanced church. In my judgment, the church's struggle in contemporary America reflects only a broader culture of disproportions. My take on American culture at large is that it is rooted in tensions which are not necessarily contradictory. If we were to rub out all of those tensions (which will never happen), America would cease to exist. The trick has always been to hold those competing ideals and values in creative, balanced tension; and that's how I see this reading of the witness model in Scripture.

One of my favorite voices on the topic of integrating faith and learning is Steve Garber, whose book, The Fabric of Faithfulness, posits an image of Christian faithfulness which I also associate with You Are My Witnesses. Tracing the witnessing mandate and advancing it as a model for biblically-based Christian education, this text powerfully discloses the perfect integrity of the Bible, like the finest fabric flawlessly conceived and woven strand by strand to constitute a beautiful, unified, sufficient whole; and thus it is itself a compelling witness to the GOD who is its perfect subject.