Course Descriptions None 2025-2026

Course Title	Theories and Models of Learning
Course Code	EBC4102
ECTS Credits	6,5
Assessment	Whole/Half Grades

Period

Period	Start	End	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2	27-10-2025	12-12-2025		X		X	

Level	Intermediate/Advanced
Coordinator	Therese Grohnert For more information:t.grohnert@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Language of instruction	English

Goals

Content Objectives:
1. You will understand and be able to apply three main theories of professional learning to L&D challenges.
2. You will understand both cognitive and social mechanisms of learning for individuals and teams at the workplace, deriving actionable implications for L&D practitioners.
3. You will understand and be able to apply evidence-based mechanisms to enhance L&D at the individual and at the team level.

Skill Objectives:
1. You will be able to apply conceptual modelling to frame new and complex learning and development challenges in existing knowledge and theory.
2. You will be able to derive well-founded implications for practice and future research based on your conceptual model.
3. You will have built a conceptual model based on your own learning needs and processes that helps you to continue learning beyond this master programme.
4. You will facilitate the learning of other students through a safe learning environment, knowledge sharing and co-construction, developing a shared conceptual model with limitations and implications.

Description

What is expertise and how does it develop? What does it take for professionals to perform well in complex situations? And when do teams perform at their best? These are some of the key questions we address in this course, building on insights from cognitive and social psychology in the context of the workplace. We introduce, apply and evaluate three key theories on professional learning. First, you will learn about expert performance and the development of expertise, a specific approach to explain how chess grandmasters are able to perform highly complex calculations at record speed, how top musicians learn to perform at the highest levels, and what it takes to become a true expert in a professional domain. However, not all professions are like chess or music: the world of accountants, consultants, managers, pilots and doctors is less predictable, more complex, and subject to change and innovation. So, in the next two blocks, we explore theories of learning that help professionals cope with their professional environment. The second block focuses on the theory of the reflective practitioner and shows how professionals' performance can be improved over time under significant uncertainty. In the final block, we explore how teams learn and how their learning can be fostered effectively within an organisation. We look at teachers, pilots and auditors to explore key drivers of team learning behaviour and performance. Through tutor- and student-led tutorials, workshops with practitioners, assignments, and challenges, you will learn to master the skill of conceptual modelling in order to solve increasingly complex cases and to formulate actionable implications for practice, in addition to acquiring knowledge about theories of learning at the workplace.

Literature

All required articles and academic book chapters can be accessed online via the university library or the Canvas course environment. Next to these academic resources, we also work with the following books for context and application:
1.) Ericsson, K. A., & Pool, R. (2016). Peak – Secrets from the New Science of Expertise. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
2.) Duhigg, C. (2016). Smarter Faster Better – The Transformative Power of Real Productivity. New York City, NY: Random House.
3.) Dirksen, J. (2016). Design for How People Learn - Second Edition. Hoboken, NY: New Riders.

Prerequisites

This specialized course requires a basic understanding of cognitive psychology, research on human information processing, and the social nature of learning. As foundation literature the following handbook is recommended:
Sternberg, R., & Sternberg, K. (2016). Cognitive Psychology, 7th Edition. ISBN-10: 1305644654, ISBN-13: 9781305644656.

Transitional Regulations	
Teaching methods	PBL / Assignment / Groupwork
Assessment methods	Final Paper / Assignment / Portfolio
Evaluation in previous academic year	For the complete evaluation of this course please click http://iwio-sbe.maastrichtuniversity.nl/rapporten.asp?referrer=codeUM

This course belongs to the following programme / specialisation

Master Learning and Development in Organisations	Compulsory Courses