

ESHR: Experiential Informal Learning Informal Concentration Area (ICA)

Learning happens everywhere and supports everything we do. Do you have interest in supporting learners in informal settings such as the outdoors, maker spaces, museums, studios, before- and after-school programs, camps, or clubs? Our courses in the *Experiential Informal Learning ICA* will help you develop skills to design instruction and support learners in informal learning spaces.

Do you have content knowledge in topics that move beyond the traditional classroom such as environmental science, music, drama, sports, art, poetry, gardening, and video games? The content studied in the *Experiential Informal Learning ICA* will add to your skills and knowledge to set you apart from your peers by preparing you to share your interests and expertise with individuals, groups, and communities. Whether facilitating inquiry around archeological wonders for a group of museum visitors ages 2 to 102, mentoring young artists as they build their interests and skills through making, helping children learn through play at a summer camp, coaching athletes to success, or leading nature explorations for youth and adults, in this ICA you will develop the skills to design, implement, and facilitate instruction in informal learning spaces while developing your interpersonal skills and understanding of people.

Experiential Informal Learning ICA is designed to work with many academic trajectories. The *Experiential Informal Learning & Environments* pairs well with other ESHR ICAs such as *Learning, Design, & Media*, and *Diversity Education*. Combining our courses with one of these or another discipline will deliver a skill set that prepares you to work in various informal learning spaces. See a list of suggested majors, minors, or certificates to pair with the *Experiential Informal Learning ICA* below:

Major, Minor, Certificate Suggestions

Majors/Minors

[Business](#)
[Environmental Sciences](#)
[Health Promotion](#)
[Public Health](#)
[Science Studies](#)
[Sports and Recreation Management](#)

Certificates

[Event Management](#)
[Geographic Information Science](#)
[Museum Studies](#)
[Nonprofit Leadership and Philanthropy](#)
[Public Digital Arts](#)
[Sustainability](#)

Career opportunities for students with an ESHR focus on learning in informal learning environments will vary based on other knowledge and experiences they bring. Potential opportunities could include state parks and interpretive centers, community centers, youth leadership programs, museums, maker spaces, recreation services, athletic organizations, and summer camps.

With this focus in ESHR, students will be well-positioned for graduate work in Learning Sciences, Educational Psychology, Museum Studies, and Informal Education. The University of Iowa offers a combined [U2G program from ESHR](#) to their Learning Sciences and Educational Psychology MA program. This ICA will help position you to apply for that program. Check with our ESHR advisor before the end of your junior year.

Recommended courses:

(Students are encouraged to take one or two courses from each skills/content area.)

Experiential Learning Foundations (Students are strongly encouraged to take this course)

EDTL:3715 Experiential Teaching and Learning

Introduction to practice of experiential learning and teaching; students create and lead experiential activities in formal and informal learning environments; exploration of factors that impact the value of an experience and assess impact;

integration of multiple disciplines and perspectives in a collaborative manner; skills for processing and guiding reflection to determine outcomes of experiences; work collaboratively to design, plan, execute, and determine outcomes of an experience for a target population.

Understanding Learning

PSQF:4281 Cognitive Principles for How People Learn

We use the word learning to refer to a diversity of experiences. What ideas from cognitive science might help us unify diverse experiences such as learning to tell time or tie your shoes with experiences such as the disciplinary learning undergraduates must develop in college courses. By enrolling in this course, you will determine the nature of how cognition leads to learning.

Understanding Learners

PSQF:4106 Child Development

Theories and research findings about typical course of child development, differences in development. Requirements: junior standing.

PSQF:4133 The Adolescent and Young Adult

Psychological and social aspects of adolescence and young adulthood; emphasis on theory, research, and practical applications.

Designing and Understanding Environments

EDTL:4987/CSED:4187 Introduction to Assistive Technology

How assistive technology can be used for attainment of goals in education or work.

PSQF:4205 Design Principles for How People Learn

Designing effective instruction, whatever the learning environment, the characteristics of the learners, or the format of delivery, is best accomplished through a systematic and iterative process. By enrolling in this course, you will engage in a process used to design instructional experiences that build on principles of learning, cognition, and instructional design.

PSQF:4750 Learning Environments: Design, Context, and Activity

Students explore the design of learning environments and the kinds of activities that take place there; includes a general background on design of learning environments; emphasis on project- and problem-based learning (considered to be keys to 21st-century learning), media inclusion, and how teacher facilitation/questioning and cooperative learning are foundational for success.

PSQF:4760 Participatory Learning and Media

Teaching and learning with 21st-century digital media; pedagogical approaches characterized by participatory learning that expands and blurs boundaries of the classroom; remixing educational, social, and entertainment-based media toward pedagogical ends that meet instructional goals; engagement with social media, web-based video, interactive media, podcasts, games, and simulations.

Leadership

CSED:4111 Building Leadership and Success at Work

Strategies to achieve employer expectations of effective leadership, communication, motivation, teamwork, and conflict management; students gain knowledge of self and how to best respond in various workplace situations.

CSED:4140 Foundations of Leadership for Community Agencies

Preparation to become effective employees and leaders; emphasis on leadership roles in clinical and other human service or health care settings; how leadership transcends job title associated with high work performance; experiential activities that illustrate key didactic concepts and didactic lecture review, written assignments, experiential assignment, in-depth discussions illustrating key concepts.

Specific [non-traditional/informal] Learning Environments

EPLS:4200 Diversity and Inclusion in Athletics

Diversity and inclusion as major issues for coaches, sports managers, physical activity professionals, and athletic administration staff in their workplaces; define, discuss, and analyze effects of diversity and inclusion in the athletic organizational environment; experience of underrepresented groups in sport settings, covering differences of religion, race, ethnic origins, gender, sex, ability, appearance, and age; understanding power differences, based on diversity within an organizational environment, that help future leaders implement successful practices inclusive of all persons. Requirements: undergraduate standing and enrollment in interscholastic athletics/activities director certificate program.

Internship Experiences

While not a part of the 30 credits that contribute to the ESHR major, we encourage students interested in this concentration area to include a number of internship and practicum experiences in their coursework as they earn their BA. Please visit with the ESHR advisor about how to find and register for these opportunities that may help to customize your experiential informal learning background.

Faculty Liaison

[Kay Ramey](#), Assistant Professor, Learning Sciences & Educational Psychology

Last updated 11/01/2024