

**Applied Research in Adult Education:
 Planning, Assessing, and Evaluating Programs for Adults**

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Spring 2021

3 Credits

Instructor Name: Brian Dashew	Email address: brian.dashew@gse.rutgers.edu
Phone Number: 848-932-0780 <i>(during spring 2021, Zoom is preferred. I am on Zoom any time I am at my computer and I am available at brian.dashew@gse.rutgers.edu)</i>	Location: N/A This is an asynchronous online course. Please see details below.
Office Hours: By appointment (see policy below)	Prerequisites or other limitations: For matriculated students in the Ed.M. in adult and continuing education with a minimum of 18 credits applied in the program.
Mode of Instruction: <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Permission required: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Directions about where to get permission numbers: Please contact your advisor.

Learning Goals

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- L1: Apply qualitative research techniques to assess learning needs.
- L2: Effectively generate the knowledge required to set programmatic goals and inform the design of educational strategies for attaining them.
- L3: Assess organizational context for political and managerial elements that need to be considered in program design and implementation
- L4: Construct instruments to assess learning and mastery of educational content.
- L5: Evaluate the overall impact of a program in relation to previously determined goals.

Catalog Description

This course is designed as one-half of a capstone learning experience in which students will acquire skills of research habitually applied to the design and implementation of educational

programming. Students will engage with each other discovering the importance of data-driven decision-making in the facilitation of learning. Key elements include the identification of goals and outcomes, the assessment of learning needs and of learning itself, and the final evaluation of program quality.

Full Description

When adult educators are tasked with building new programs, where does the request come from? How do we know that a program is “needed?” Projects often have sponsors, and as a result they are frequently laden with hidden politics that risk masking conditions that might impact your design. Or else we make assumptions about a need, risking an error in defining the audience or business need.

During the course, you will apply your emerging understanding of applied research practices to a series of case studies. We will routinely reflect on what you are learning in these activities and explore the ways in these lessons are applicable in the varied contexts in which adults learn.

Your final deliverable in this course will be an individual portfolio that will include several applied research instruments and plans needed in adult learning program development, management, and evaluation. Throughout the semester, you will receive feedback on your research instruments and plans. Your final product should include a comprehensive needs assessment and evaluation plan that can be used in your Training Design capstone course.

Textbooks and Materials

There are two required texts for this course:

McDolrick, B. and Tobey, D. (2016). *Needs Assessment Basics (2nd Ed.)*. Alexandria, VA: ATD Press.

Kirkpatrick, D.L. and Kirkpatrick, J.D. (2006). *Evaluating Training Programs (3rd Ed.)*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishing, Inc.

You may also find the following text helpful. I will make required chapters from this book available on Canvas, but at several points I will suggest additional chapters for further reading.

Cervero, R.M., and Wilson, A.L. (2006). *Working the planning table: Negotiating democratically for adult, continuing, and workplace education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Grading Scale

93–100 A
88–92 B+
83–87 B
78–82 C+
73–77 C

Methods of Assessment/Course Assignments

You are expected to complete all reading assignments, watch all lectures, fully and professionally participate in the online discussions and activities, and submit assignments on or before their due dates. All assignments should be submitted through the course website. **All written work should have a cover page, be double spaced, use Times New Roman 12 pt. font, and include a properly formatted reference page using APA style.** For more information about APA and guidance on formatting, visit <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>.

Individual Capstone Project (70%)

Throughout the course, you will develop a research portfolio that is comprised of tools that you will need to address a practical training need in a context of your choosing. Each component of the project will be evaluated both on your application of course principles to your specific project context and on your reflections of how the group activities and feedback have helped you to refine and improve your research tools. The components of the project you will develop are:

- **Assignment 1 (25 pts): Wakelet Board and Proposal:** During the first two weeks of the semester, you will use Wakelet to collect resources that begin to contextualize an organizational need for a training intervention. You will use the material you collect (and your reflections on these materials) to author a one-page proposal for your capstone project. You will need to include basic information about the context, your understanding of how the need is currently being expressed, and an explanation of what the training will need to include.
- **Assignment 2: Needs Assessment (100 pts):** A project needs assessment should define a project need. It must also include the objectives for your project. You should describe the business or organizational need, the performance need, the learning need, and the learner need for your project.
- **Assignment 3: Program Evaluation Plan (100 pts):** The final part of your project must include two components. The first of these is a plan for your assessment of learning. All assessment instruments should be fully developed and a rationale for their design must be included. Secondly, you must include a plan for the evaluation of the program. You should articulate and defend what data you will need to collect, the sources of that data, and a plan for how you will take action on your findings. You should include both direct and indirect measures for your program evaluation.

Assignment 4: Reflections and Progress Reports (20%): To help you stay on track on this project (and to help you develop an awareness of how course materials relate to your project), you will author two (2) progress report and reflection different points in the semester. These reflections must include important artifacts from the research process (a table of information needs and draft instrumentation), and will also include reflections about how our course activities relate to your capstone project and to your work as an adult educator more broadly. You are also encouraged to think about how this work connects to other content and activities from your time

in the ACE program. At the conclusion of this course, you will pull these reflections together into a final reflection that will serve as both a reflection on your time in this course and this program. Each of your reflections is required and will be graded complete/incomplete.

Class Participation (10%). To help you with your applied research practice, you will participate in regular discussion activities. These activities will take one of two forms. Either you will be looking at case studies as examples for how you can apply course content to your own portfolio, or you will be working in small research groups to share progress on your project and receive feedback to help you improve project elements. Peer review is time consuming, but incredibly valuable work. It will allow you to a) see content applied in other contexts, b) gain familiarity with the checklists and rubrics that I will be using to evaluate your work, c) provide a venue for you to get feedback on your project, 4) reinforce what you are learning. You will be assessed on your level of participation and on your ability to apply course concepts in practice.

Policies

Academic Integrity Policy: Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Refer to Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy for a full explanation of policies.

TurnItIn: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (directly or Canvas) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. Students who do not agree should contact the course instructor immediately.

Instructor communication: You will hear me say this repeatedly: learning research is a bit like learning a foreign language. You must practice it before it starts to make sense. To that end, I encourage you to keep an open mind and open lines of communication with me and your colleagues throughout this course. There is no synchronous session scheduled for this semester; however, I am happy to schedule a zoom call with you to talk about your project at any point in the semester. I see that as an essential part of my role in your projects. If you are having any difficulties in this class (understanding content, assignments, etc.) please feel free to reach out to me to set up a time to speak.

I try to respond to all messages within 24 hours on weekdays or 48 hours on weekends. If you do not hear from me in this window, I encourage you to reach out again. If you have questions about an assignment, please be sure to ask them far enough in advance of the assignment due date that I can conform to this response policy. In other words, if your assignment is due on Sunday at 11:59 pm, you should be sure to email me early in the day on Friday because it may take me 48 hours to respond.

While I am happy to speak with you and offer feedback on your project, I am not able to “pre-grade” your assignments. If you ask me to look at assignment drafts before they are due, I will only be able to spot check to make sure that major elements are present.

Web site: This course is offered through Canvas Learning Management System. Registered students will have access to the course site.

Late work and resubmission: The policy for late work and resubmissions is determined based on the type of assignment.

Assignments 1-3: After receiving feedback, you may resubmit major written assignments that are part of your capstone project (Assignments 1-3) for re-grading once. My goal is to give you opportunities to practice with the skills and knowledge you learn in this class and for you to leave with the best possible work product. As such, the resubmission will be graded for up to full credit (i.e. your final grade is the highest, not an average of grades). For these assignments, a 10% deduction is automatically assigned for late work. Note that you will not be able to earn back any points lost because of a late submission penalty; in other words, the highest grade you will be able to earn on a late assignment is a 90%. Please allow three days (72 hours) for re-grading. Final resubmissions must be on Canvas by Sunday, May 9.

Assignment 4: The purpose of your reflections in this class is to underscore your own learning and to ensure that you are on track to complete your project by the end of the semester. Late work is therefore problematic because you are missing an important checkpoint in the process. Late reflection papers (if complete) can be submitted up to one week late for 50% credit. These papers are graded complete/incomplete, but you must meet all requirements in order for a paper to be considered complete. Incomplete papers will not earn full credit.

Class Participation: As noted in this syllabus, class participation is critical to your learning. The value is in the interaction and discussion that takes place through Canvas. As such, late participation assignments will not be graded (automatic 0 for the week).

Accommodation

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus' disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site.

Course Outline

All readings below are subject to change.

For an itemized listing of module topics, activities, and due dates, see individual modules and the Course Schedule below this syllabus in the Canvas course shell.

Week. Topics	Readings	Assignments
1. Course Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">What is Applied Research?	Clardy, A. <i>Studying Your Workforce: Applied Research Methods and Tools for the Training and Development Practitioner.</i>	Discussion: Introduce Yourself

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Needs Assessment • Introduction to Evaluation <p>(1/19-1/24)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 1: Using Research for Training and Development <p>https://trainingindustry.com/magazine/sept-oct-2017/creating-a-data-driven-learning-strategy/</p>	
<p>2. Organizational Research for Training and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Why is research important? * What are different formats in which organizational research can take place? <p>(1/25-1/31)</p>	<p>Cervero, R. and Wilson, A. <i>Working the Planning Table</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 1: Seeing what Matters <p>Clardy, A. <i>Studying Your Workforce: Applied Research Methods and Tools for the Training and Development Practitioner</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 4: Front-End Assessment: Identifying Performance Problems and Training Needs • Ch 5: Front-End Assessment: Training Programming from Needs Assessment 	<p>Individual Assignment 1: Wakelet Board and one-page project proposal</p> <p>DUE 1/31</p>
<p>3: Introduction to Needs Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the four phases of needs assessment? <p>(2/1-2/7)</p>	<p>McGoldrick and Tobey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 1: Why Needs Assessment? (p. 1-10) • Ch 2: The Training Request (p. 11-24) 	<p>Class Discussion: Darian College Case Study – Why is Needs Assessment Important?</p>

<p>4. Thinking Like a Researcher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From practice to research • Developing an information table <p>(2/8-2/14)</p>	<p>McGoldrick and Tobey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 3: Identifying Questions and Data Sources (p. 25-36) • Ch 9: The Ideal Organizational Scan (p. 141-148) <p>Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. (2018). <i>Introducing and Focusing the Study</i>. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publishing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 6: Introducing and Focusing the Study (p. 127-146). 	<p>Class Discussion: Darian College Case Study, Part II – What Should we Have Known?</p> <p>Reflection I (Project Status Report)</p> <p>due 2/14</p>
<p>5: Data Collection: Using Interviews for Answer Questions</p> <p>(2/15-2/21)</p>	<p>McGoldrick and Tobey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ch 4: Evaluating Potential Data Collection Methods <p>- Rubin and Rubin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ch 8: Structure of the Responsive Interview - Ch 9: Designing Main Questions and Probes 	<p>Discussion: Crafting an Interview</p>
<p>6: Data Collection: Using Surveys to Answer Questions</p> <p>(2/22-2/28)</p>	<p>Czaja, R. and Blair, J. (2011). <i>Designing surveys</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.</p> <p>Ch 4: Questionnaire design Ch 5: Organizing questions</p>	<p>Discussion: Building a Survey</p>
<p>7. Data Analysis</p> <p>(3/1-3/7)</p>	<p>Saldaña, J. (2016). <i>The coding manual for qualitative researchers</i> (3rd Edition).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 1: Introduction to Coding <p>- C+W: Ch 4: Negotiating the Program’s Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Discussion: Trying Data Analysis</p> <p>Reflection 2 (Project Status Report)</p> <p>DUE 3/7</p>

<p>8. Learning Objectives</p> <p>(3/8-3/12)</p>	<p>McGoldrick and Tobey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ch 6: Data Analysis - Ch 7: Data Analysis Recommendations <p>- C+W: Ch 5: Negotiating the Program's Educational, Management, and Political Objectives</p> <p>- Mager: Ch 4: The Qualities of Useful Objectives</p>	<p>Optional discussion: Lingering Questions</p>
<p>Spring Recess – 3/13 – 3/21</p>		
<p>9. Program Evaluation in Context</p> <p>(3/22-3/28)</p>	<p>Kirkpatrick.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 1: Evaluating: Part of a 10-Step Process (p. 1-15) • Ch. 2: Reasons for Evaluating (p. 16-20) • Ch. 3 The Four Levels: An Overview (p. 21-26) 	<p>Assignment 2: Full Needs Assessment (25%)</p> <p>Due 3/28</p>
<p>10. Evaluation of Learning I</p> <p>(3/29-4/4)</p>	<p>Kirkpatrick:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 4: Evaluating Reaction (p. 27-41) • Ch. 12: Developing an Effective Level 1 Reaction Form (p. 117-123) • Ch. 5: Evaluating Learning (p. 42-51) <p>- Morrison, Ross, Kemp, and Kalman: Ch 12: Developing Evaluation Instrument</p>	<p>Discussion: Course Evaluation – Does it Need to be Redesigned?</p>
<p>11. Evaluation of Learning II</p> <p>(4/5-4/11)</p>	<p>Soep, E. (2005). Critique: Where Art Meets Assessment. <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i>, 87(1), 38–63.</p> <p>Milton, J., Hall, C., Lang, J., Allan, G., and Nomikoudis, M. (2009). <i>Assessment in Different Domains: Conference Proceedings of the ATN Assessment Conference 2009</i>. Melbourne, Australia: Learning and Teaching Unit of RMIT University.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The affective domain, beyond simple knowing • Assessment of interprofessional competencies for health professional students in fieldwork education placements 	<p>Discussion: Designing Level 2 Assessment Strategy</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-plays as authentic assessment: five models to teach professional interventions 	
<p>12. Analyzing Behavior Changes and Assessment of Institutional Change</p> <p>(4/12-4/18)</p>	<p>Kirkpatrick</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 6: Evaluating Behavior • Ch 7: Evaluation Results <p>Vanhournout, D. (2006). <i>Return on Learning: Training for High Performance at Accenture</i>. Agate Publishing Incorporated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 3: Proving the ROI in Learning <p>Recommended: Ch. 15-17 (p. 144-199)</p>	<p>Discussion: Calculating a Return a Investment</p>
<p>13. Considerations for Implementation: Continuous Improvement</p> <p>(4/19-4/25)</p>	<p>Kirkpatrick</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ch 8: Implementing the Four Levels (p. 71-74) * Ch 9: Managing Change (p. 75-81) 	
<p>14. Consideration for Implementation: Scale and Big Data</p> <p>(4/26-5/2)</p>	<p>https://www.efrontlearning.com/blog/2017/05/using-data-driven-learning-training-success.html</p>	<p>Assignment 3: Evaluation Plan (25%)</p> <p>DUE 5/2</p>
<p>15. Final Reflections</p> <p>(5/3-5/9)</p>		<p>Assignment 5: Program Reflection (20%)</p> <p>DUE FRIDAY 5/7</p> <p>All revisions due by 5/9</p>