Applied Research in Adult Education:
Planning, Assessing, and Evaluating Programs for Adults
15:233:570:90
Summer 2021
3 Credits

Instructor Name: Brian Dashew
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Phone Number: 848-932-0780
(during summer 2021, Zoom will be preferred. I am on Zoom any time I am at my computer and I am available at brian.dashew@gse.rutgers.edu)

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:
___ Lecture
___ Seminar
___ Hybrid
X Online
___ Other

Permission required:
___ No
X Yes
Directions about where to get permission numbers:
Please contact your advisor.

Statement on Access and Accommodations
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: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s 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 (https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration).

Learning Goals
Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- L1: Apply qualitative research techniques to assess learning needs.
- L2: Set programmatic goals that inform the design of educational strategies.
• L3: Construct instruments to assess learning and mastery of educational content.
• L4: Evaluate the overall impact of a program in relation to previously determined goals.
• L5: Demonstrate an appreciation for the value of research in adult education program design.

Catalog Description
This course is designed as one half of a capstone learning experience in which students will acquire skills and mindsets associated 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 design of training activities and programs. Key elements will 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 include two applied research tools that are used in program design: a comprehensive needs assessment and an evaluation plan that instruments for assessing the quality of your program design.

Textbooks and Materials
There are two required texts for this course:


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.

Grading Scale

93–100 A
88–92 B+
83–87 B
78–82 C+
73–77 C
72 and below F

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/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/).

**Individual Capstone Project (70%)**

Throughout the course, you will work on a research portfolio that is comprised of tools that you 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 Project 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 (100 pts): Needs Assessment:** 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 (100 pts): Program Evaluation Plan:** 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 reflections at 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. These reflections are required and will be graded complete/incomplete.

A final reflection is due 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. This reflection is graded based on your ability to meet the requirements of the assignment.

**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 required synchronous session 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 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 Wednesday, 8/18 (final day of the semester)

*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).

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week. Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is Applied Research?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
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| 6/1 – 6/6 | • Introduction to Needs Assessment  
• Introduction to Evaluation | Training and Development Practitioner.  
• Ch 1: Using Research for Training and Development  
Cervero, R. and Wilson, A. Working the Planning Table.  
• Ch 1: Seeing what Matters | DUE 6/6 |
• The Business Need  
• The Performance Need  
• The Learning Need  
• The Learner Need | McGoldrick and Tobey  
• Ch 1: Why Needs Assessment? (p. 1-10)  
• Ch 2: The Training Request (p. 11-24) | Class Discussion: Darian College Case Study – Why is Applied Research Important?  
Individual Assignment 1: Final Wakelet Board and one-page project proposal  
DUE 6/13 |
### 3: Thinking Like a Researcher: Asking Questions about the 4 Levels
- From practice to research
- Developing an information table

(6/14 – 6/20)

McGoldrick and Tobey:
- Ch 3: Identifying Questions and Data Sources (p. 25-36)
- Ch 9: The Ideal Organizational Scan (p. 141-148)

- Ch 6: Introducing and Focusing the Study (p. 127-146).

Discussion: Darian College Case Study, Part II – What Should we Have Known?

**Reflection I due 6/20**

### 4. Data Collection: Using Interviews to Answer Questions

(6/21 – 6/27)

McGoldrick and Tobey:
- Ch 4: Evaluating Potential Data Collection Methods

Rubin and Rubin:
- Chapter 8: Structure of the Responsive Interview
- Chapter 9: Designing Main Questions and Probes

Discussion: Crafting an Interview

### 5: Data Collection: Using Surveys to Answer Questions

(6/28 – 7/4)

- Ch 4: Questionnaire design
- Ch 5: Organizing questions

Optional Reading

Discussion: Crafting a Survey

Reflection 2 (Project Status Report)

DUE 7/4

{please note I will accept these up to 7/5 without penalty}
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<th>6: Learning Objectives</th>
<th>McGoldrick and Tobey:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Your Organization Inside and Out</td>
<td>- Ch 5: Data Collection Implementation</td>
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<td>Developing Objectives</td>
<td>McGoldrick and Tobey:</td>
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<td>(7/5 – 7/11)</td>
<td>- Ch 6: Data Analysis</td>
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<td>- Ch 7: Data Analysis Recommendations</td>
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<td>- C+W: Ch 5: Negotiating the Program’s Educational, Management, and Political Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional Readings</td>
<td>Mager: Ch 4: The Qualities of Useful Objectives</td>
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<td>Patton:</td>
<td>- Ch 6: Fieldwork strategies and observation protocols</td>
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<td>- Ch 1: Introduction to Coding</td>
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<td>- C+W: Ch 4: Negotiating the Program’s Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>(7/12 – 7/18)</td>
<td>- Ch. 1: Evaluating: Part of a 10-Step Process (p. 1-15)</td>
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<td>- Ch. 2: Reasons for Evaluating (p. 16-20)</td>
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Assignment 2: Full Needs Assessment

**DUE 7/18**
| 8. Evaluation of Learning I | Kirkpatrick:  
- 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)  
- Morrison, Ross, Kemp, and Kalman:  
Ch 12: Developing Evaluation Instrument | Discussion: Course Evaluation – Does it Need to be Redesigned? |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
- The affective domain, beyond simple knowing  
- Assessment of interprofessional competencies for health professional students in fieldwork education placements  
- Role-plays as authentic assessment: | Discussion: Designing Level 2 Assessment Strategy |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>10. Analyzing Behavior Changes and Assessment of Institutional Change</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick</td>
<td>Ch 6: Evaluating Behavior, Ch 7: Evaluation Results</td>
<td>Discussion: Calculating a Return on Learning</td>
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<td>Ch 3: Proving the ROI in Learning</td>
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<td>Recommended:</td>
<td>Ch. 15-17 (p. 144-199)</td>
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<td>11. Consideration for Implementation: Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick</td>
<td>Ch 8: Implementing the Four Levels (p. 71-74), Ch 9: Managing Change (p. 75-81)</td>
<td>Assignment 3: Evaluation Plan</td>
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<td>(8/9 – 8/15)</td>
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<td>DUE FRIDAY 8/13</td>
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<td>12. Final Reflections</td>
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<td>Assignment 4: Program Reflection</td>
<td>DUE 8/18</td>
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<td>(8/16 – 8/18)</td>
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<td>ALL REVISIONS DUE 8/18</td>
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