

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

EDRS 820
Evaluation Methods for Educational Programs and Curricula
Spring, 2010
Thursday, 7:20-10:00; Robinson A352

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Office hours: T/W/Th: 2:30 – 4:00 or by appt.

Course Description: This course explores the development and types of current systems and models for evaluating educational programs and curricula. The emphasis is on the needs and problems of public and private elementary and secondary schools, as well as colleges and universities, although the needs of government agencies, industry, and health-related organizations are also considered. *Prerequisites: Successful completion of EDRS 810 or permission of instructor. Prior completion to EDRS 811 and 812 is helpful, but not required.*

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the students should be able to:

1. trace the distinctive history of educational evaluation and the purposes it serves.
2. compare and contrast the multiple approaches for evaluating educational programs and curricula.
3. learn to pose evaluation questions appropriate for their unique settings.
4. design and implement an evaluation plan for some aspect of their professional lives.
5. gain insight into the political, ethical, and interpersonal aspects of planning, implementing, and reporting program evaluations.

Required Course Text:

Fitzpatrick, J.L., Sanders, J.R. & Worthen, B.R. (2003). *Program evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines*. 3rd edition. New York: Pearson.

Recommended Text:

Publication of the American Psychological Association. 6th ed. (2009). <http://apastyle.apa.org/>

Additional readings posted on blackboard.com

Other Selected Materials Related to Educational Evaluation

Eisner, E. W. (1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Posavec, E.J. & Carey, R.G. (2006). *Program evaluation: Methods and case studies*. (6th edition). New York: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation thesaurus*. (4th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stufflebeam, D.L., Madaus, G.F., and Kellaghan, T. (eds.). (2000). *Evaluation models: Viewpoints on educational and human services evaluation*. (2nd edition). Boston: Kluwer.

Some Relevant Websites:

www.eval.org: The website for the American Evaluation Association, the leading professional association for evaluators. See also, www.eval.org/hstlinks.htm, which is AEA's chronicle of state-based activities on high-stakes student testing.

www.wmich.edu/evalctr: Western Michigan University's Center for Evaluation, which is one of the premier sites for thought and practice in evaluation.

<http://pareonline.net>: An electronic journal devoted to the field of education evaluation.

<http://oerl.sri.com> is the Online Evaluation Resource Library, which catalogues countless plans, data collection instruments and evaluation reports.

<http://epa.sagepub.com> This is a link to the AERA journal Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. A comparatively new journal to AERA, but one which was needed because it recognizes the intersection of inquiry and practical decisions about the effective use of resources.

<http://www.washeval.org> is the regional association of evaluators. Membership is very reasonable and there are periodic professional development opportunities for members.

Plus many others on the blackboard site.

Supplies

Computer with Internet access and current GMU email account.

CEHD Course Expectations

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Attendance is mandatory, as the discussions that take place in this class are essential to achieving the course objectives.

Each student is expected to complete all the assigned readings and participate in the discussions. It is expected that each student will be attuned to group dynamics in order to ensure the active participation of all in the class.

If you must miss a class, you are responsible for notifying me (preferably in advance) and for completing any assignments, readings, etc. before the start of the next class.

All assignments must be completed in MSWord and sent to me as an attachment via email prior to class. Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with me.

Course Delivery

My teaching style revolves around “learning via conversation.” In addition to classroom attendance and participation, you are expected to complete readings, whole class and small group discussions, group, pair, and individual projects, internet research, analyses of case studies, and reflections on practice. I will use GMU’s web-accessible Blackboard course framework regularly throughout the course; many of the examples are posted there for you to read in advance of our discussions.

Course Assignment

Each student will prepare and implement an evaluation plan. The course is organized such that a plan can be developed from week to week with the student completing each part of the plan as we read and discuss the text and related readings. Four tasks are designed to aid you to meeting some deadlines in your already busy lives. The implementation of the plan is the only requirement for this course. It will be evaluated against selected criteria from the Joint Committee’s Standards for Program Evaluation found on page 448 of the text as figure 18.1, and prepared in the following rubric.

If it is at all possible, I would like you to present your findings to your audiences.

Four Assignments

These tasks are intended to encourage you to think about your perspective and skill as a beginning evaluator.

Assignment #1: Identifying Possible Projects. Divide a piece of paper into two columns. Think about where you work and on the left side and list three specific programs and/or curricula that have been implemented, e.g., a new textbook series, a technology program, a professional development initiative, etc. Include the goals/objectives for the program/curriculum. On the right side, generate as many questions as you can about the worth and merit of the program/curriculum. **Due date: February 18.**

Assignment #2: Gathering Information for the Evaluation Plan. From the list generated for Assignment 1, identify a program/curriculum (of which you are not a part, preferably) that interests you or your organization. Now imagine that you are the evaluator for this program/curriculum. Speak with those in charge of the program/curriculum and other relevant stakeholders and audiences and determine what they might want to know about the merit and worth of the program/curriculum. Submit an analysis of their divergent and convergent questions. **Due date: March 18.**

Assignment #3: The Evaluation Plan. Using the many methods and approaches to conducting an evaluation, identify the approach that most matches the needs of your audiences so that the results will be credible to the stakeholders. In this paper, I would like you to submit a draft of an evaluation plan that addresses the topics and formats we've discussed to date. **Due date: April 8.**

Assignment #4: Final Evaluation Report. Using the rubric below as a writing guide, prepare the evaluation report as if you are writing for your "client". The report will be evaluated using an abridged version of the Joint Committee's Standards in the rubric. **Due date: May 6.**

Tentative Schedule

1/21	Introduction to the Course
1/28	How evaluation came to be as a field Read chapters 1-2
2/4	Models are really value statements: Objectives-oriented evaluation Read chapters 3-4 Peruse Palm Education Partners on blackboard Peruse and review: https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/
2/11	Models are really value statements: Management and Consumer Read chapters 5-6 Read The Challenge Index and The Challenge Index Challenged on blackboard
2/18	Models are really value statements: Expertise, Participant and more Read chapters 7-9 Read Weaver and Cousins (on blackboard) Peruse: SACS, and NCATE on blackboard Assignment #1 due
2/25	Reading minds Read chapters 10-11
3/4	Values and Radar: Building a credible plan Read chapter 12 Read Physics evaluation plan on blackboard
3/11	Spring Break
3/18	Decisions, Decisions: What to collect... Read chapter 13 Assignment #2 due
3/25	...and how Read chapter 14 for next week
4/1	“Not enough information” Read chapter 15
4/8	Reporting Read chapter 16 Assignment #3 due
4/15	Among the minefields to keep the client satisfied Read chapter 17

- 4/22 Writing Evaluation Reports
Read chapter 18
- 4/29 Assessing the evaluation experience and evaluation's future
Read chapter 21
- 5/6 Presentation of evaluation
Evaluation Reports Due

Rubric for Reviewing Evaluation Reports (*Use this to guide your writing*)

Accomplished: Each of the evaluation criteria is exceptional in its thoroughness of definition, description, and detail.

Basic: Each of the evaluation criteria is met in their definition, description, and detail.

Unsatisfactory: Some of the evaluation criteria are treated fully and others are treated incompletely or inadequately in their thoroughness of definition, description and detail.

Utility Standards

U1 Stakeholder Identification. Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

U3 Information Scope and Selection. Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders

U4 Values Identification. The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described, so that the bases for value judgments are clear.

U5 Report Clarity. Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation, so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

Practical Standards

P5 Complete and Fair Assessment. The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the program being evaluated, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

Accuracy Standards

A1 Program Documentation. The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately, so that the program is clearly identified.

A2 Context Analysis. The context in which the program exists should be examined in enough detail, so that its likely influences on the program can be identified.

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures. The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail, so that they can be identified and assessed.

A4 Defensible Information Sources. The sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail, so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.

A5 Valid Information. The information-gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use.

A6 Reliable Information. The information-gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use.

A7 Systematic Information. The information collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be systematically reviewed, and any errors found should be corrected.

A8 Analysis of Quantitative Information. Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A9 Analysis of Qualitative Information. Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A10 Justified Conclusions. The conclusions reached in an evaluation should be explicitly justified, so that stakeholders can assess them.

A11 Impartial Reporting. Reporting procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation, so that evaluation reports fairly reflect the evaluation findings.