# EDRS 820

## Evaluation Methods for Educational Programs and Curricula

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Tuesdays 2:30 – 4:30 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: Longman.

## Recommended Text:

Publication of the American Psychological Association. 5th ed. (2002).

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.

Posavac, E.J. & Carey, R.G. (1997). Program evaluation: Methods and case studies (5th edition).  Upper Saddle River, NJ: 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.

## 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://ericae.net is the ERIC Clearinghouse for Assessment and Evaluation.  Also chronicles education news on a daily basis from media outlets around the country.

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

## 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, students 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.

**Course Assignment**

Each student will prepare and implement a brief 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.  Three 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.  In your presentation on *December 7*, I would like you to include a brief discussion of how the report was received.

**Four Tasks**

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

**Assignment #1**:  Divide a piece of paper into two columns.  Think about where you work and on the left side make a list of specific programs and/or curricula that have been implemented, e.g., a new textbook series, a technology program, a professional development initiative, etc.  On the right side, generate as many questions as you can about the worth and merit of the program/curriculum.  **Due date:  September 21**.

**Assignment #2:**  From the list generated for the Assignment 1, identify a program/curriculum (of which you are not a part) 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 program/curriculum.  **Due date:  October 19**.

**Assignment #3:**  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 them.  In this paper, I would like you to begin to craft an evaluation plan that addresses the topics and issues we've discussed to date.  **Due date:  November 9**.

**Assignment #4:**  Using the rubric above, prepare the evaluation report as if you are writing for your "client".  The report will be used using the abridged Joint Committee's Standards in the rubric.  **Due date:  December 7**.

## Tentative Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| 8/31 | Introduction to the Course
Read chapters 1-2 (for next week) |
| 9/7 | How evaluation came to be as a field
Read chapters 3-4 (for next week) |
| 9/14 | Models are really value statements, part 1
Read chapters 5-6 for next week |
| 9/21 | Models are really value statements, part 2
*Assignment #1 due*
Read chapters 7-9 for next week |
| 9/28 | Models are really value statements, part 3
Read chapters 10-11 for next week |
| 10/5 | Reading minds
Read chapters 12 for next week |
| 10/12 | Fall break |
| 10/19 | Values and Radar: Building a credible plan
*Assignment #2 due*
Read chapter 13 for next week |
| 10/26 | Decisions, Decisions:  What to collect…
Read chapter 14 for next week |
| 11/2 | …and how
Read chapter 15 for next week |
| 11/9 | "Not enough information"
*Assignment #3 due*
Read chapter 16 for next week |
| 11/16 | Reporting
Read chapter 17 for next week |
| 11/23 | Among the minefields to keep the client satisfied
Read chapter 18 for next week |
| 11/30 | Figuring out how well I did |
| 12/7 | Presentations of Evaluations
*Evaluation Reports Due* |

Rubric for Judging Evaluation Plans

| | *Accomplished* | *Basic* | *Unsatisfactory* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Stakeholder Identification** | | | |
| Audiences are clearly identified | The audiences are clearly defined to include their perspectives | The audiences are described by their roles | The audiences are not described in significant detail to inform the plan |
| Audiences' needs are clearly identified | The audiences' needs are discussed and juxtaposed | The audiences' needs are presented | The needs of the audiences are not discussed. |
| Plans' objectives are consistent with needs | The plans are clearly tied to the audiences' needs | The plans approximate the audiences' needs | There is little to no link between the plan the audiences' needs |
| Information will be useful to the audiences | Evaluator makes clear how the information will address those needs | Evaluator outlines the data and it potential to the project | No consideration of the information and audiences is presented |
| **Reliability** | | | |
| Data collection is clearly described | Methods are explicitly including instrument dimensions | Methods are generally proposed without much discussion of specifics | Methods discussion lacks thoroughness |
| Controls are in place to minimize error | Evaluator is clear about role, schedules, and timeliness; plan is thorough | Approach seems piecemeal; lacking a comprehensive plan | Plan is sketchy on the specifics to minimize errors |
| Free from evaluator bias | Evaluator has controls in place to assure objectivity | Data analysis is described without much attention to the contexts that can raise questions later | No controls are described that would assure objectivity |
| **Practical Procedures** | | | |
| Resources are adequate | Estimates of time and money are detailed | A general budget or timeline is included without much detail | Discussion of resources is lacking or missing |
| Management plans are clearly described | A management plan outlines dates of activities so audiences can track the progress | Management plan is general | No management plan is included |
| Can the plan stay on schedule? | Rich description of what can derail the work is included so that the audiences can anticipate their roles | A brief discussion of how the plan can be maintained is included | No provisions are made to help the audiences prepare for a project gone awry |