



Pitt Education

EFOP 3201-1300

# Introduction to Evaluation in Education

3 credits, Spring Term 2023-2024

## INSTRUCTOR

Keith Trahan, PhD

Visiting Assistant Professor of Practice

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**Office Hours:** Please email me to set up an in-person or Zoom meeting

## MEETING TIME

Thursdays, 6:00-8:40 pm; 5400 Posvar Hall

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Provides a general overview of evaluation, which is defined as "providing information useful to decision-making." The various purposes of evaluation are identified, and the use of different types of information for each purpose are discussed. The variables that affect the usefulness of information are emphasized. Both evaluation theory and practical experience are utilized to prepare people who will be fulfilling an evaluation function or using evaluation results for professional decision making.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Name and describe major paradigms of evaluation and research in education and the social sciences
2. Use logic models to describe a program's theory of change
3. Describe and select appropriate evaluation designs, methodologies, and methods for a variety of program types
4. Develop a survey with scaled and open-ended items
5. Develop an interview and focus group protocol
6. Analyze survey, interview, and administrative data and represent findings in narrative, table, and chart forms
7. Write an evaluation plan

## COURSE MATERIALS/TEXT

The core text for this course is:

Mertens, Donna M. (2019). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*. SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

This book is available [electronically on PITTCat through ProQuest Ebook Central](#). All other readings will be uploaded to Canvas.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Below are the assignments for the course; additional details will be discussed in class(es) prior to due dates.

### **Individual Meeting, Weeks 1-3; Due Jan 26 (5%)**

During the first three weeks of class, please schedule a 20-minute Zoom meeting with me so that we can get to know one another. I would love to learn more about your experience and interest in evaluation and education, your journey to graduate studies here at Pitt, and I can best support your learning in this course and your program of study.

### **Foundations Paper; Due Jan 28 (10%)**

Write a brief paper (3-page max) comparing research, evaluation, and related types of inquiry, and the role(s) of each in education. Connect your ideas to course readings and a specific area/aspect of education in which you have the most interest and/or experience.

### **Logic Model, Methodology, and Measures; Due Feb 18 (15%)**

Develop or re-develop a program logic model (One page max). Then, identify and describe related measures and your preferred methodology for evaluating the program (Two pages max).

### **Survey and Interview/Focus Group Development and Administration; Due Mar 10 (15%)**

Develop and administer a survey instrument and interview/focus group protocol for a selected program or intervention.

### **Survey and Interview/Focus Group Data Analysis; Due Mar 24 (15%)**

Conduct analyses of survey and interview/focus group data from part 4 of course or an existing data set from your place of practice.

### **Executive Summary of Findings; Due April 7 (15%)**

Create an executive summary of findings from the survey and interview/focus group data analysis assignment.

### **Evaluation Proposal; Due April 21 (15%)**

Develop an evaluation proposal for a program of interest or experience.

### **Ongoing Engagement (10%)**

Engagement in class activities is the foundation of our collective learning. Please complete assigned readings for weekly class meetings and be prepared for discussion.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

\*Please read the materials listed for each week in advance of that class session, as they will be discussed during class. All readings will be available on Canvas, or in the core text.

### Part 1: The Theoretical Foundations of Evaluation (Weeks 1, 2, and 3)

#### Week 1—Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>

*Underlying theories of social science inquiry and investigation*

- Syllabus
- Mertens (2019) Chapter 1 • An Introduction to Research and Ethical Practice Why Bother? (Skim if possible; will be broadly discussed in class)

#### Week 2—Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>

*Foundations of Evaluation*

- Mertens (2019):
  - Chapter 1 • An Introduction to Research and Ethical Practice Why Bother?
  - Chapter 2 - Evaluation
- Troachim, W. (2023, Dec 9). Introduction to Evaluation. *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. <https://conjointly.com/kb/introduction-to-evaluation/>

#### Week 3—Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>

*Evaluation and Related Learning and Design Models*

- Christie, C., Lemire, S., & Inkelas, M. (2017). Understanding the similarities and distinctions between improvement science and evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2017(153), 11-21.
- Bernhardt, V. (1998). Multiple Measures: Invited Monograph No. 4. *California Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (CASCD)*.
- Bryke, A., Gomez, L., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. (2015). Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better. Harvard Education Press. (Introduction)

### Part 2: The Planning and Process of Evaluation

#### Week 4—Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>

*Understanding the Evaluand (What Are You Evaluating) and Its Context*

- Mertens (2019) Ch. 3 - Literature Review and Focusing the Research (Evaluation)
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (2004). Using logic models to bring together planning, evaluation, and action. Logic model development guide. Battle Creek, Michigan: WK Kellogg Foundation. Available at: <http://www.wkkf.org/knowledge-center/resources/2006/02/WK-Kellogg-Foundation-Logic-Model-Development-Guide.aspx>
- Bennett, B., & Provost, L. (2015). What's your theory?. *Quality Progress*, 48(7), 36.

#### Week 5—Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>

*Evaluation and Research Designs*

Mertons (2019):

- Ch. 4 Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research (Evaluation)
- Ch. 5 Causal Comparative and Correlational Approaches

## **Week 6—Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>**

### *Methodologies and methods in general*

- Mertens (2019)
  - Ch. 8 Qualitative and Action Research
  - Ch. 10 Mixed Methods Research
  - *Optional*
    - Chapter 7 - Single Case Research
    - Chapter 9 - History, Narrative Study of Lives, and Autoethnography
- Hamilton, J., & Feldman, J. (2013). Planning a Program Evaluation: Matching Methodology to Program Status. In *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology* (pp. 249–256). Springer New York. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3185-5\\_20](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3185-5_20)

## **Part 3: The Practice of Evaluation; Common Evaluation Methods/Activities**

## **Week 7—Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

### *Survey Methods*

- Mertens (2019) Ch. 6 Survey Methods
- [Select two of the readings and one resource from the survey module]

## **Week 8—Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>**

### *Interviews and Focus Groups*

- Mertens (2019) Ch. 12 Data Collection
- [Select two of the readings and one resource from the interview module]

## **Week 9—Mar. 7<sup>th</sup>**

### *Secondary Analysis*

- Mertens (2019) Ch. 12 Data Collection (Revisit)
- Johnston, M. (2014). Secondary data analysis: A method of which the time has come. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries*, v. 3. p 619-626.
- Smith, E. (2008). Pitfalls and promises: The use of secondary data analysis in educational research. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56(3), 323-339.

## **Part 4: The Practice of Evaluation; The Basics of Data Analysis**

## **Week 10—Mar. 14<sup>th</sup>**

### *Data analysis, part 1*

- Mertens (2019) Ch. 13 (pp. 439-468)
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. [Companion Website: Includes sample interview transcripts, code lists, group exercises, and flash cards, <https://study.sagepub.com/saldanacoding3e/>]
- Boone, H.N. & Boone, D. A. (2012). Analyzing likert data. *Journal of Extension*, 50(2).

## **Week 11—Mar. 21<sup>st</sup>**

### *Data analysis, part 2 (Application)*

- Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L.L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J.F. Gubrium, J.A. Holstein, A.B. Marvasti, & K.D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of interview*

research: The complexity of the craft (Second edition, pp. 347-365). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. [SHB Chap 24]

- Henderson, S., & Segal, E. H. (2013). Visualizing qualitative data in evaluation research. In T. Azzam & Evergreen (Eds.), Data visualization, part 1. New Directions for Evaluation, 139, 53-71.
- Data & Analysis Basic Overview  
(<https://www.qualtrics.com/support/search/?q=data%20analysis%20qualtrics>)

## **Part 5: The Practice of Evaluation; reporting results and evaluation utilization**

### **Week 12—Mar. 28<sup>th</sup>**

#### *Reporting findings, part 1*

- Mertens (2019) Ch. 13 (pp. 471-487)
- Chen, J., McCray, J., Adams, M., & Leow, C. (2014). A survey study of early childhood teachers' beliefs and confidence about teaching early math. Early Childhood Education Journal. Vol. 42, No. 6: 367-377.
- Henderson, S., & Segal, E. H. (2013). Visualizing qualitative data in evaluation research. In T. Azzam & Evergreen (Eds.), Data visualization, part 1. New Directions for Evaluation, 139, 53-71.
- [David McCandless, The Beauty of Data Visualization \(TED Talk\)](#)

### **Week 13—Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>**

#### *Reporting findings, part 2*

- Pil, F.K. & Leana, C. (2009). Applying organizational research to public school reform: The effects of teacher human and social capital on student performance. Academy of Management Journal. Volume 52, No. 6, 1101-1124.
- Chi, M. T. H. (1997). Quantifying qualitative analyses of verbal data: A practical guide. The Journal of the Learning Sciences, 6(3), 271-371.
- [Excel Data Analysis - Data Visualization - Tutorialspoint](#)

## **Part 6: Putting it all together; From proposals to reports**

### **Week 14—Apr. 11<sup>th</sup>**

#### *Developing an evaluation proposal*

- Mertens (2019) Ch. 13 (pp. 469-470)
- Three Tips for a Strong NSF Proposal Evaluation Plan (<https://evalu-ate.org/blog/goodyear-aug2016/>)
- Writing Research and Evaluation Plans for NSF Grants: How are they similar and different? (<https://aaas-iuse.org/resource/writing-research-and-evaluation-plans-for-nsf-grants-how-are-they-similar-and-different/>)
- [TBD - Examples of evaluation proposals and reports to be determined by student interest and experience]

### **Week 15—Apr. 18<sup>th</sup>**

#### *Final presentation and celebration*

- No additional readings

## Academic Integrity

The integrity of the academic process requires fair and impartial evaluation on the part of faculty and honest academic conduct on the part of students. To this end, students are expected to conduct themselves at a high level of responsibility in the fulfillment of the course of their study. It is the corresponding responsibility of faculty to make clear to students those standards by which students will be evaluated and the resources permissible for use by students during the course of their study and evaluation. Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, from the February 1974 Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom reported to the Senate Council, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, which can be found online at:

<http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html>

## Disability Services

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located in 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.

## Health and Safety

In class meetings, we will applicable public health regulations, the University of Pittsburgh's health standards and guidelines. These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all students, faculty, and staff. The University's requirements for face coverings will at a minimum be consistent with CDC guidance and masks are required indoors on campus when the COVID-19 Community Levels are High. This means that when COVID-19 Community Levels are High, you must wear a face covering that properly covers your nose and mouth when you are in the classroom. If you do not comply, you will be asked to leave class. Masks are optional indoors for campuses in which county levels are Medium or Low. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit the Power of Pitt site and check your Pitt email for updates before each class.

Your health and well-being are important to me and are critical to your ability to succeed with your graduate studies. Thus, I am committed to being flexible and responsive. Please email me with any issues or concerns that you have regarding the course so that we can strategize together and find a path to success.

The University has a variety of health and safety support available to students. Please reach out to the appropriate office/center if needed. They are there to help.

Counseling Center, in the Wellness Center in Nordenberg Hall: <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cc/>  
Call **412-648-7930**, any time.

Sexual Assault Response: 412-648-7856

Care and Resource Support Team (CARS): Email [pittcares@pitt.edu](mailto:pittcares@pitt.edu) or see:

<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cars/>

Resources for Mental Health: Faculty and Staff Guide for Helping Distressed Students