Reflective Letter

Latavia Williams

Old Dominion University

During the course of the semester in the program implement funding online class, I learned about conducting observations by the use of data collection methods, understanding purposes of evaluation and steps of evaluating an agency, measures used in evaluation, ways of monitoring an evaluation, and communication plans. The experience of understanding the use of these components not only helped me facilitate personal growth and professional learning, but it also helped me understand how critical the role of evaluation is in the Human Services field. I learned the importance of evaluation, to gather data and analyze it in such a way that can determine whether an organization is effectively conducting activities that is beneficial for the evaluator or participants that are a part of the program. Evaluating a program can greatly improve the management or effectiveness of an agency, so understanding the differences between monitoring and conducting an evaluation was an integral part of my learning.

Learning the different components in this course was demonstrated through discussion board posts, chapter readings, and tasks that were assigned. I really liked the discussion board activities, as it allowed me to use critical thinking skills and participate in a more thoughtful manner. I was able to see not only what I thought when it came to evaluation, but also from my classmates. Prior to taking this course, I was not aware of the importance of evaluating an agency, especially when it comes to looking into a career you want to pursue. I learned throughout the semester how beneficial an evaluation can be. Throughout the chapter readings, I was able to understand procedures of planning an evaluation and the core purposes of an evaluation through different methods: qualitative and quantitative evaluation, empowerment evaluation, success case method, goal-free evaluation, capacity building, expert opinion model, and the theory-driven model. I also improved my APA formatting through the Owl Purdue site, as this site provides information to assist students with many writing projects and components. Below are the readings and the site that were beneficial to my learning in this course:

[Posavac, E. & J, & Carey, R. G. (2003). Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall](https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/9180912)

[Owl Purdue Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/)

The different module readings and online lectures also helped me learn about tasks that are beneficial when conducting an evaluation, as well as common issues that can occur during an evaluation. An issue that I felt would be a challenge when conducting an evaluation is setting realistic and appropriate goals. Some organizations may not feel as if there need to be any changes, so it is important to put in specific thoughts that would stand out or improve programs. The areas that I felt I improved the most were the tasks that we were assigned weekly. For each task, I was able to learn from the other and improve my writing skills. The different rubrics for each task also assisted me in improvement and in preparations for the E-portfolio. As we moved forward in the semester, I was able to better understand and extend the material learned throughout the course. I felt as if some of the tasks were difficult, so receiving feedback and corrections on the assignments also helped me with learning. I have not been able to apply concepts that I have learned in this course as of yet, but I now have the knowledge of doing so in preparations for my career in the future.

The course’s content will intersect with my field by giving me objectives to go by when selecting by career. I will know what to expect when deciding the career I want to pursue and the importance, such as recognizing the stakeholders, understanding the agency’s role, and observing the agency. The course’s content will also be beneficial if I want to own my own non-profit organization in the future, as I will need to understand the role of research methods and agency descriptions.