Preface

PURPOSE

This book advances a framework, a process and meaningful approaches for assessing and evaluating adult learning in career and technical education (CTE). Increased interest in and use of theoretical and empirical assessment and evaluation methods have created a need for this book’s unique contributions to the literature in the field of adult education and career and technical education. For years, our students and scholars/practitioners in the field have been without pertinent textbooks used to accurately and effectively assess and evaluate adult learning in the field. Books on assessment and evaluation have been written by scholars/practitioners from other fields of study rather than by people from the field of adult education or career and technical education. It is common sense that we have known more about how animals learn than about how children learn and we know much more about how children learn than about how adults learn. Since most students in the field of career and technical education are adult learners, to help these learners learn requires teachers, trainers, practitioners and even scholars to accurately and effective assess and evaluate their learning so that progress on the part of the learners can be made. To assess and evaluate adult learning in CTE requires a thorough understanding of the nature of adult learners, principles of andragogy, formal and informal evaluation methods, theory of transformative learning, teaching philosophies and technology. Application of traditional assessment and evaluation methods effective for assessing learning of traditional age students may not work for evaluating adult learning in the field. With this purpose in mind, I called for chapters especially from leading scholars/practitioners in the field of adult education and career and technical education. To my great delight, Patricia Cranton, a leading adult educator from Penn State contributed a chapter on self-evaluation. Other authors for the book are also outstanding scholars/practitioners in the field. The book then addresses the key elements of the process of assessment and evaluation: self-evaluation, transformative learning, history of andragogy, teaching philosophies, and much more. At each step in this process, the reader is taken through multiple and meaningful approaches of assessing and evaluating adult learning in the field of career and technical education. Hopefully after reading the whole book, our readers will become well versed in terms of accurately and effectively assessing and evaluating adult learning. Then, it is time to say, “We know much more about how adults learn than about how children learn.”
AUDIENCE

This book is intended for undergraduate and graduate students and faculty who seek assistance in preparing a comprehensive plan for assessment and evaluation of adult learning in the field of career and technical education. No need to say, this book is an excellent textbook for credential students in CTE and adult education. At a broader level, the book may be useful as both a reference book and a textbook for graduate students in research methods. The rich information, multiple approaches of writing different chapters, exemplary usage of APA style and theoretical bases will all add to our readers’ knowledge base in terms of not only assessment and evaluation but also of research methods. To best take advantage of the features in this book, the reader needs a basic familiarity with principles of andragogy, transformative learning theory and teaching philosophies first. Then, the reader needs to proceed to the chapters that address different kinds of assessment and evaluation approaches appropriate for adult learning in the field. Finally, this book also is intended for a broad audience in the social and human sciences. It is commonly argued that those who do not know how to accurately and effectively gauge learning do not know how to make progress. This line of thought says a great deal about the importance of assessment and evaluation. I hope that students, faculty and researchers including those from even K-12 education, higher education and others will find the book useful.

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