Candidate: Michelle Woodhouse
For the degree of: Doctor of Philosophy
Department: Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Evaluation
Title: An Analysis of Evaluation Practices of Two Training Programs in the Healthcare Sector Using the New World Kirkpatrick Model
Committee: Dr. Chris Coryn, Chair
Dr. Kyle Brink
Dr. Michael Scriven
Time/Place: Thursday, July 14, 2016
1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
4410 Ellsworth Hall

The American Customer Satisfaction Index Report in 2015 indicated that service quality in the healthcare sector has declined even though the demand for healthcare service is rising. Companies invest billions of dollars annually to develop and implement customer service training programs; however, although companies evaluate their programs in order to continuously improve customer satisfaction, service quality is still on the decline. This may be because the evaluation process is neither formal nor comprehensive. Although the literature indicates that companies carry out evaluations, little is known about the actual evaluation process that is utilized to evaluate training programs, the levels at which the customer service training programs are evaluated, and how the evaluation results/findings are used.

This multi-site qualitative case study investigated how two companies in the healthcare sector of the service industry evaluate their customer service training programs in order to propose a solution to ultimately improve service quality. The research questions focused on: (1) how customer service training programs were evaluated at these two institutions, (2) how the evaluation findings were utilized, (3) the extent to which the training programs were evaluated according to the New World
This study was guided using the theoretical framework outlined in the New World Kirkpatrick Model. Data were collected using a qualitative approach which included document review, observation, and interviews with stakeholders such as training managers, trainers, quality assurance managers, supervisors, lead analysts/pod trainers and trainees. The data were analyzed using within case and cross case analysis. The major finding from this study was that although both companies utilized an informal evaluation process, they did indeed address three of the four levels outlined in the New World Kirkpatrick Model. However, the study clearly revealed that there is need for a formal professional evaluation approach and improvement in the manner in which levels 1-3 are conducted and incorporation of level 4 into the evaluation approach. The results of this study will therefore be beneficial to training and quality professionals in the healthcare industry.