



Robert Abrams Consulting

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Program Evaluation

Robert Abrams, Ph.D.

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Introduction

I have served as a program evaluator and researcher for many organizations working in several fields. Common threads to my work include attention to detail, thoroughness, clear reporting and timely delivery of reports. I have skills in both quantitative and qualitative analysis, photographic documentation and more. As an independent consultant, I can work solo or engage colleagues as needed to bring a complete package of skills and effort to an engagement.

Major engagements

<i>Organization Name & Title</i>	<i>Org. Size</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Summary of Work</i>
Teachers College / Columbia University <i>Research Associate</i>	Large	School food	Report writing. (This engagement just started recently.)
New York City Department of Education – Office of School Support Services (incl. School Food) <i>Senior Analyst & Marketing Manager</i>	Large	School food	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Analysis of Point of Sale data (100+ million transaction records/school year)2. Program evaluation for the Garden To Café project.3. Taste testing: survey development, administration and analysis.4. Letters to the Chef: qualitative analysis using teacher-developed curricula.5. External research coordination.6. Scratch cooking: development of spreadsheets for metrics reporting.7. Other program evaluation and analysis as needed.
Care for the Homeless <i>Senior Program Evaluator</i>	Medium	Homelessness & health care	Conducted quantitative and qualitative evaluations for many departments, including projects relating to wellness days, job readiness, medical records, public speaking/homelessness policy education and shelter performance improvement such as recidivism reduction.

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Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory/Dolan DNA Learning Center <i>Evaluation Consultant</i>	Medium	Science education	Conducted external evaluations of the Silencing Genomes, Inside Cancer and Genes to Cognition Online educational projects.
Empire State College <i>Adjunct Professor</i>	Medium	Education	Helped to develop a course on educational evaluation for Empire State College's Masters in the Arts of Teaching program. Taught the science education section of this course using an on-line instruction system for students located throughout New York State. One of the senior Empire State College faculty told me that my comments on student papers were "comprehensive, appropriately evaluative, supportive and on-target." A poster based on the work of this course was presented at the 2 nd International Conference on Concept Mapping.
Menzie-Cura Associates <i>Evaluation Consultant</i>	Medium	Indoor air quality	Conducted an evaluation of a computer-based curriculum on indoor air quality.
Poughkeepsie Day School <i>Consultant</i>	Medium	Distance learning	Reviewed options for distance learning and explored how the school might offer advanced and other specialized classes.
Metis Associates <i>Research and Evaluation Consultant</i>	Medium	Educational evaluation	Collaborating, colleagues and I: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed educational assessments that impacted school district planning as part of a team of researchers. 2. Conducted a two year evaluation of the use of laptop computers in a Bronx school district, which led the district to seek and ultimately receive approval for program expansion. 3. Performed statistical analysis for the Greater Cleveland, Ohio school district that allowed the district to restructure the school system. 4. Developed a new client report format that allowed staff at Metis Associates to deliver reports with much less cost to the client. 5. I was involved with data collection instrument design, survey implementation, classroom observations, data analysis, and report writing, as well as the creation of project budgets and workplans.
Hewitt School <i>Evaluation Consultant</i>	Medium	Use of laptop computers	Conducted an evaluation of the use of laptop computers at the Hewitt School.

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University of California - Santa Cruz Post-Doctoral Researcher	Medium	Educational research, primarily in science education and literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virtual Canyon Project: Provided major assistance in the development of a method, based on the construction and analysis of open-ended concept maps, which can be used to assess student understanding, and to compare the understanding of groups of students studying different topics, for a study of the <i>Virtual Canyon</i>, a project that fostered student participation in science. Prepared a paper on the method that was published in the <i>International Journal of Science Education</i>. Researched learning outcomes and assisted with instrument design, data collection, statistical analysis and report writing. 2. California Consortium for Teacher Development: Facilitated email discussions in this consortium which brought together educators from schools and universities around the state to discuss issues of literacy. 3. Shared Values Project: Served as project director and worked with two teachers to demonstrate how concept maps can be used to teach nine and ten year old children about values and help them express their religious traditions in order to reduce prejudice. Documented how students applied what they learned.

Smaller engagements

<i>Organization Name</i>	<i>Org. Size</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Summary of Work</i>
SP3 Innovations	Small	Mental health	Designed data collection and conducted analysis for a study of teenagers' search strategies for mental health information.
Donna Sternberg and Dancers	Small	Dance	Patron feedback study.
Cornell University - Department of Education	Medium	Education	Modernized the Proceedings of the Seminars on Misconceptions and Educational Strategies in Science and Mathematics, funded by a grant from the Golton/Novak Fund.
La Danserie	Small	Dance	Audience research.
Education On-Line	Small	Math education	Conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of an interactive TV program that teaches middle school mathematics. Conducted a literature review to find best practices for an on-line tutoring project.
Center for Applied Technologies in Education	Medium	Arts education	Helped to identify arts related curriculum resources for inclusion in an on-line database.

<i>Organization Name</i>	<i>Org. Size</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Summary of Work</i>
Forever Foundations	Medium	Business	Conducted an evaluation of a new storage bedframe product (at an advanced prototype stage of product development), for potential delivery and usage issues.
Proctor and Gamble	Large	Consumer behavior	Developed large-scale concept maps on consumer behavior.
Major NYC dance studio	Medium	Dance	Conducted a market research/business intelligence project to assess the offerings of both this dance studio and its competition.
Cornell University Program in Real Estate	Medium	Real estate	Developed concept maps to condense the main ideas from a 230 page thesis to ten pages for Franklin Becker, chair of Design and Environmental Analysis at Cornell, who used these maps to give an effective presentation. Taught a workshop on how to construct concept maps for graduate students in the Program in Real Estate.
Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO is a non-profit organization founded after the Three Mile Island accident. INPO collects incident reports from member nuclear power plants, conducts analysis and review, and then creates advisory reports sent to all U.S. nuclear power plants to continually improve power plant safety. This is a model worth a look for other industries interested in collective improvement.)	Medium	Nuclear power	Developed several examples of different ways concept maps could be used to enhance technical reports. Helped the Institute's staff make progress with concept maps greater than they were able to make on their own. Taught staff how to create well-constructed concept maps. Client was impressed and pleased with my work, including my ability to quickly acquire and intelligently use knowledge of nuclear power, despite nuclear power being a new field to me. I have permission to share the concept maps from this project, but only in person.
Speech therapist	Small	Speech therapy	Researched technology solutions to allow a speech therapist to create audio presentations.

Other software, web and curriculum development

ExploreDance.com: Publishing a web magazine with 5000 pages of content (as of 6/19/19) and 1 million page views of traffic per month. Successfully completed a Kickstarter campaign to support continued development of the magazine.

BreakfastMeet.com: Developed a prototype conversation menu, using vintage menu blanks. (See the second post of the blog for the link.)

LifeMap: Developed software for concept mapping and vee diagrams.

Orton Gillingham Style Reading Instruction Fortune Cookies: Developed Orton Gillingham style texts to teach reading to students with dyslexia. The texts fit the space constraints of custom-printed fortune cookies. Produced both Kosher and non-Kosher prototype fortune cookies. The response to the cookies and texts from students of a reading tutor have been very positive.

Dance Your Verbs: Wrote a photography-based children's board book.

Misconceptions conference proceedings: Developed one of the first on-line conference proceedings (Proceedings of the Seminars on Misconceptions and Educational Strategies in Science and Mathematics). This project was supported by the National Science Foundation.

Work and skills common to multiple engagements

Surveys (including scannable surveys), interviews, project management, concept map assessments, experimental studies, standards alignment, training materials development, project budgets, workplans, mapping, test development, databases, photographic and video documentation. SPSS including substantial syntax coding experience, Stata, some SQL. Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, some CaptureOne. HTML, PHP, SuperTalk. MS Office, including extensive Excel formula coding. Public speaking training through Toastmasters. Supervision of staff.

Education

Ph.D. Cornell University, Education
Dissertation: Professional Isolation and Connection among High School Science Teachers in Upstate New York, a study inspired by teachers' use of on-line communication.

M.S. Cornell University, Education, minors in Conservation & Sustainable Development, and Communications

B.A. Stanford University, Human Biology, concentration in Environmental Management

Continuing education

StartingBloc Fellow 2019.

Passed the Associate Staff Analyst exam (NYC Civil Service).

I have completed extensive reading on school food research related topics.

I have completed a Udemy course on SQL programming.

In the course of POS data analysis, my SPSS programming skills have increased.

Improved Excel formula coding skills.

Completed a Fotocare/PhaseOne food photography workshop taught by Bill Milne.