

# Evaluation of Training Methods

by

**Kathleen C. Werrell**

**Patricia H. Sine**

**Jeffrey Fahnoe**

**College of Engineering  
Office of Educational Technology  
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**DELAWARE CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION**

**University of Delaware  
355 DuPont Hall  
Newark, Delaware 19716  
(302) 831-1446**

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*This work was sponsored by the Delaware Center for Transportation and was prepared in cooperation with the Delaware Department of Transportation. The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Delaware Center for Transportation or the Delaware Department of Transportation at the time of publication. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.*

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*Delaware Center for Transportation  
University of Delaware  
Newark, DE 19716  
(302) 831-1446*

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Evaluation of Training Methods Project  
July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003  
Final Report

Kathleen C. Werrell  
Patricia H. Sine  
Jeffrey Fahnoe

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Introduction and Research Approach.....	2
Findings.....	2
Interpretation, Appraisal, and Applications.....	4
Conclusions and Recommendations .....	4
References Used Herein and Recommended for Future Research .....	6
Appendix 1: Reaction Survey and Results .....	7
Appendix 2: Annual Survey and Results .....	10
Appendix 3: Behavior Surveys .....	16
Appendix 4: Revised Surveys - Forms for Long-term Use by DelDOT .....	18

## Abstract

This year-long study of training opportunities offered through the Delaware T<sup>2</sup> Center revealed that evaluation of T<sup>2</sup> courses, while of interest, is unlikely to have any impact for Delaware employees because of the long period of time before those same courses are again offered in the State of Delaware. Therefore, the focus shifted to the selection of courses/topics, choosing the optimum course format and schedule, comparing participant reactions to the various courses, and identifying ways to help Delaware's transportation employees understand what they can gain from a given course and then assess how they put their new knowledge to use. Tools developed for future use include an Excel program for comparison of Reaction Survey scores from various courses, as well as three revised surveys (one for use pre- and post-class to measure learning, one to measure participant reaction, and a third to use three months following the class to measure behavior and ultimately return on investment). A recommendation to examine web-based software tools, including "Friday 5s", developed by Fort Hill Co., is also made as a more sophisticated tool for measuring return on the investment made in training.

# Introduction and Research Approach

The intention of this project was to find a way to evaluate offerings of the Delaware T<sup>2</sup> Center.

The primary authority in evaluation of training is Donald L. Kirkpatrick, whose work is the starting point for all other training evaluation texts (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Kirkpatrick defines four levels at which training can be evaluated:

Reaction	Yields immediate feedback on satisfaction with training.
Learning	Measured primarily by pre/post tests. A control group is desirable.
Behavior	Measured by before and after surveys or by interviews. This should be carried out multiple times at intervals to measure how the effect is sustained.
Results	This attempts to measure ROI. However, the agency must be clear on desired outcomes to determine what to measure. Very expensive and time-consuming.

This framework was used as a starting point for the design of this evaluation.

## Findings

### Reaction Surveys

The T<sup>2</sup> Center training consists of courses and presentations contracted through FHWA, NHI and private consultants. The original plan for this project called for conducting specific analyses of six representative offerings, refining a method for gathering data and finally creating a standard method that could be used in future years to help evaluate and subsequently revise the content and delivery of offerings. Many of these training offerings are presented in Delaware as well as many other venues. Since Delaware's participation in these training opportunities constitutes only a small percentage of those taking the training throughout the country, it is unlikely that evaluations by Delaware participants will be able to significantly impact the content of any given offering.

In addition, individual offerings may not be repeated again or may not be repeated for three to five years in Delaware. With material that changes rapidly from year to year, feedback from one session would not have much impact on the content of courses three to five years in the future.

Even with those limitations, it is important to capture participant reactions at the end of each course. The desired reaction survey would be relatively easy to administer and collate. A reaction survey was developed and used at each T<sup>2</sup> course in this study. (Appendix 1) This survey has been modified for future use, in that it has been adapted to coordinate with the recommended pre-class survey (i.e., measuring learning by course participants), both described later in this report and appearing in Appendix 4.

The original reaction survey (Appendix 1) has been used in eight offerings this year. Although the data collected via the form will not be used for the originally conceived purpose, the information will allow T<sup>2</sup> to compare offerings to set a benchmark for consistent quality. To this end, an Excel

program has been developed to allow users to enter the collated numeric ratings (for categories appearing on the revised survey, FORM B in Appendix 4, and then to compare the performance of a single offering against the average scores for all other offerings.

## **Annual Survey**

Each year, the T<sup>2</sup> Center sends a survey to interested parties to help collect topics for the upcoming year. This year a new format was developed to gather more information about the range of desired topics, as well as to test some assumptions about various elements of the program. (Appendix 2) The new format is designed to make it easier to collate the results each year.

In addition, respondents were queried about possible formats for offerings. At this time, all topics are presented as full-day seminars or in a conference format. The new questionnaire presented additional formats to pave the way for more diverse offerings. However, respondents overwhelmingly voted in favor of the traditional formats.

Over the years, many assumptions have been made about the best times of the year, week and day to hold the seminars. This year the revised survey also presented questions about those assumptions. While most assumptions were borne out, some additional information was gleaned about times of the year when different topics could be offered.

Data has been collated from the surveys to help make decisions for the 2003-2004 offerings. Results from the survey are summarized in Appendix 2.

## **Behavior Surveys**

The final phase of the project was the development of survey questions to gauge the effect of participation in T<sup>2</sup> offerings on the subsequent behavior of attendees in their job responsibilities. The project team developed and utilized behavior surveys (Appendix 3) to gauge the expectations of participants and their supervisors prior to training. The team conducted phone interviews with participants of four different training sessions. At an interval of three months following the training class, attendees were again contacted to see how well their expectations had been fulfilled as they tried to put the training into practice.

The sample for this part of the project was relatively small and it is risky to draw conclusions too broadly. Those individuals who were able to be contacted both prior to and following training openly shared their opinions and desires. Utilizing this type of protocol in future years could help the T<sup>2</sup> Center ensure that the assumptions that drive them during the year are accurate. Admittedly, however, such an interview process is labor-intensive and, hence, unlikely to be maintained on a long-term basis. Therefore, alternative recommendations are made later in this report, including newly designed pre-class surveys coordinated with the modified reaction surveys, and then follow-up surveys to begin to assess behavior modification and return on the investment made in training (ROI).

Several themes were repeated in the answers to the behavior surveys conducted by phone.

- Respondents reported that they did not make informed choices about courses.
- Respondents attended courses or sent others for a variety of reasons.
  - They had had previous positive experiences with the T<sup>2</sup> Center or with particular instructors.



- The course was offered on a day or at a time when an employee could be spared from other duties.
- Because they had few goals in attending training or sending others, respondents had difficulty reporting results from training. They did report feeling positive about the experiences and generally felt that the training led indirectly to better performance of job duties because of a general better understanding of the job to be done.

## Interpretation, Appraisal, and Applications

Through these instruments and methods, a number of insights about the T<sup>2</sup> Center are emerging.

1. Although most of the clientele for T<sup>2</sup> offerings are DelDOT employees (45%), there are significant attendees from several other groups.
2. Many of the attendees from smaller municipalities are looking to the seminars to enhance their understanding of and ability to comply with government regulations. This may indicate an entirely new role for the T<sup>2</sup> Center. In some cases, these regulations are not confined strictly to transportation issues.
3. Most of the attendees interviewed before seminars had only a vague idea of what would be included in any topic. They look to the seminars to round out their education.
4. Both the planning of course offerings by T<sup>2</sup> Center and registration by participants is done on an ad hoc basis, primarily based on needs expressed by the roughly 30-50 respondents to the annual T<sup>2</sup> survey. This leaves participants unsure as to the best path to follow for structured staff development.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the T<sup>2</sup> Center and its individual offerings have received very positive reviews. Participants praise the quality of the offerings, the staff and the materials. However, the T<sup>2</sup> Center has been *reactive* in selecting courses to schedule. Based on the findings from this project, the T<sup>2</sup> Center could improve services in the following ways.

1. Use some of the T<sup>2</sup> training to focus specifically on the needs of the constituent municipalities. Although DelDOT services the overwhelming road mileage in the state, the officials in the individual municipalities have specific needs with regard to transportation and look to the T<sup>2</sup> Center as a primary source of information.
2. Encourage (train!) prospective participants to bookmark and frequently check the Engineering Outreach/T<sup>2</sup> website to understand in advance the objectives that a particular course can meet.
3. The T<sup>2</sup> Center should consider organizing courses in a coordinated sequence so that participants could elect a course of study that would progressively improve skills and knowledge in a planned manner. The T<sup>2</sup> Center may want to consider developing certificate programs so that those who complete such a program of study have some record of their

accomplishment. Ideally, by creating tracks or course sequences, such skill-building will become part of each employee's career development plan.

4. Utilize the streamlined surveys to continually assess not only reaction to training courses, but also learning and behavior change, ultimately leading to an assessment of return on investment. The revised recommended forms, found in Appendix 4, are to be used as follows:
  - a. FORM A: Goals (Behavior) Survey, to be distributed by the course instructor at the beginning of each class, with the instructions that it is important that each participant answer the questions on the form completely, including his/her name, because the forms will be collected and then handed back to them for further input at the end of the class. Stress how important this information is to the improvement of T<sup>2</sup> training opportunities as well as to their career development.
  - b. FORM B: Reaction Survey, to be distributed at the end of the class by the course instructor *along with the individual's goals survey filled out at the beginning of the class.*
  - c. FORM C: Using the responses from the Goals Survey, compile a list of goals the participants had relative to the course. Send this list to each course participant (either electronically or through the mail) at a point three months following the course, requesting that the completed survey be returned immediately. Use results to determine further training needed and suggest improvements for the respective course.
5. An alternative to Step 4, above, should be investigated, this being use of the assessment tool, Friday 5s, a web-based tool developed by Fort Hill Co. of Greenville, Delaware. PI K. Werrell has spoken with the co-developer of this tool, Cal Wick, to learn more about it and can arrange for a demonstration for all interested parties. This is a web-based software aid to leadership development. Based on the Kirkpatrick levels described on page 2 of this report, the software uses a pro-active approach known as "Friday 5s". For each course participant, the Fort Hill Co. staff set up a personalized, goal-oriented website. That site automatically sends a series of e-mail surveys to each course participant for five Fridays over a period of approximately 2.5 months following a given course. The survey basically asks, "How many times did you apply what you learned in [name of course] in a way that benefited DelDOT? Explain." The cost for setting up a course in this system is \$3,000 + a per participant fee of \$200. More information about the program is available at [www.ifollowthrough.com](http://www.ifollowthrough.com). It seems worthwhile to utilize some automated tool; however, due to potential staffing shortages, it seems that it would be useful to investigate the possibility of having Fort Hill Co. handle the clerical aspects of this task on selected courses.

## References Used Herein and Recommended for Future Research

Kirkpatrick, Donald L.. (1998). *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Phillips, Jack J.. (1997). *Handbook of Training Evaluation and Measurement Methods (Improving Human Performance Series)*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2001). *Returns on investment in training: Research at a glance*. Retrieved July 24, 2002, from <http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/core/cp0007aag.pdf>

Worthen, Ben. (February 15, 2001). *Measuring the ROI of Training*. *www.cio.com*. Retrieved July 24, 2002, from <http://www.cio.com/archive/021501/roi.html>

# Appendix 1: Reaction Survey and Results (as used in this study)

## EVALUATION FORM

Course Title \_\_\_\_\_

Course Date \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor(s): Names \_\_\_\_\_

*The University of Delaware is under contract to evaluate the continuing education opportunities and training received through the T<sup>2</sup> Center. Your answers are important!*

If you wish, you may write additional comments on the back of this paper.	1 Poor	2 Adequate	3 Good	4 Very Good	5 Excellent
Command of the Subject					
Delivery					
Willingness to entertain questions					
Overall Course					
Handout Materials					
Agenda Topics (overall relevancy)** <b>Comment below</b>					
Meeting Space					

For me, the course was: \_\_\_\_too advanced, \_\_\_\_just right, or \_\_\_\_too basic.

**\*\*Please comment:**

Have you had specific training in [course topic] instruction prior to this course?    Yes    No

What specifically did you like or dislike about the *format* of this course (lecture, case studies, etc.)?

What topics covered in this course were particularly important for you?

Specifically, please let us know how taking this course will affect your work, i.e., how do you plan to use the information from this course in your work? (*Use the back of this page as needed*)

Would you recommend the course to others? Yes \_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_

How were you selected to attend this class?

- Self-selection; then obtained approval from supervisor.
- Supervisor recommended/required that I attend this course.

Areas of Interest for Future Training (please check):

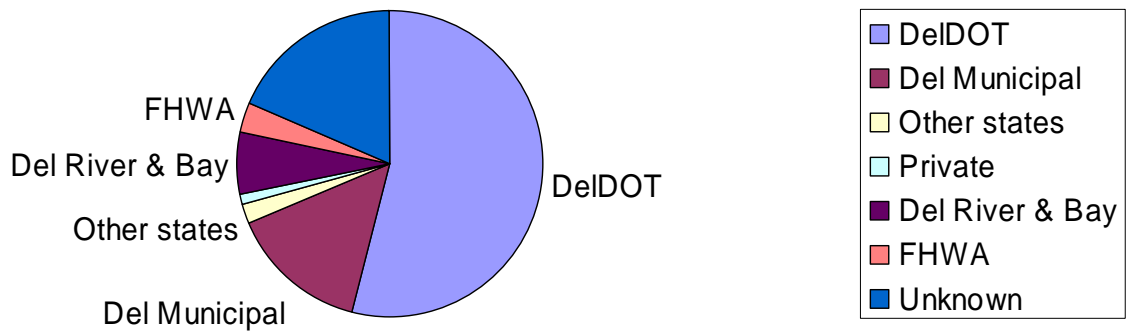
- Statistical Design of Experiments
- Mechanically Stabilized Earth Walls/Reinforced Soil Slopes
- Maintenance Engineering Series/Certificate Program
- FE or PE Review Course
- Context Sensitive Design
- Part time Graduate Program

Do you have any suggestions for course topics?    Yes \_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_

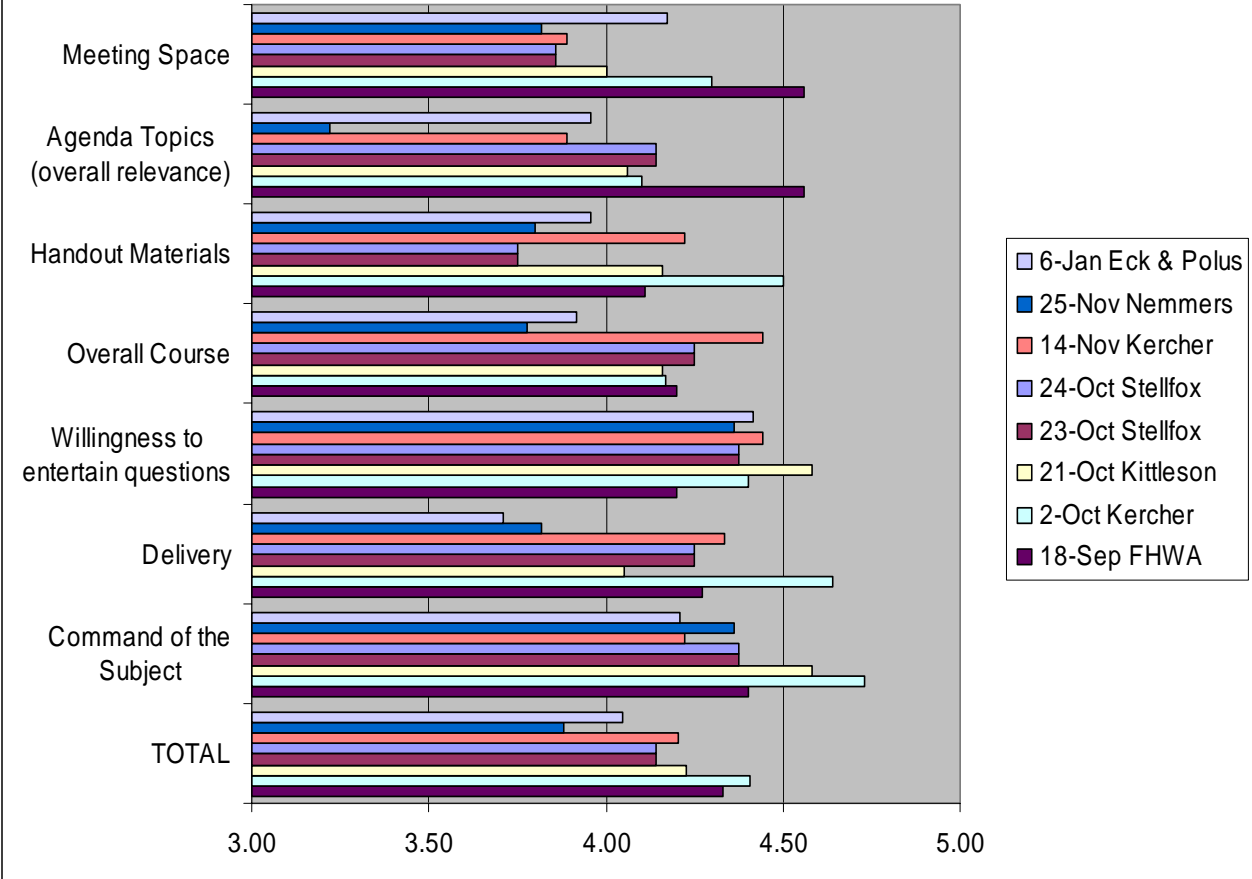
Explain (using the back of this page as needed).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

### Attendance at T<sup>2</sup> Training Sessions



### Relative Ratings of Seminars



## Appendix 2: Annual Survey

### DELDOT T<sup>2</sup> CENTER ANNUAL CUSTOMER SURVEY 2003

Each year we ask you to participate in the preparation of our Annual Work Program. Your responses to our surveys have helped us to present programs that you tell us that you need. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below so we may continue to serve you well in 2003.

**Please return this form no later than November 11, 2002 to:  
Delaware T<sup>2</sup> Center, 360 DuPont Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716**

#### TOPICS AND FORMAT

Our training sessions are offered on a variety of topics each year. We also try to present topics in a format that will make it easiest for you and your staff to benefit from the content.

Please rate from 1 (best) to 5 (Worst) the value of these topics to you and your staff by circling the number.

For each topic, indicate the presentation method that would best suit your needs for this topic by marking it with an X.

Topics*	Value of Content					Preferred Format				
	Best				Worst	Lecture	1-day seminar	Multi-day seminar	Conference with multiple concurrent sessions	Web-based Self-paced instruction
Safety*	1	2	3	4	5					
Construction*	1	2	3	4	5					
Maintenance*	1	2	3	4	5					
Bridges*	1	2	3	4	5					
Plng/Land Use*	1	2	3	4	5					
Mass Transit*	1	2	3	4	5					
Traffic Ops*	1	2	3	4	5					
Administration*	1	2	3	4	5					

**\*Please let us know any specific needs that should be addressed within these general topics.**

Please list other topics and rate them.										
Topics*	Value of Content					Preferred Format				
	Best				Worst	Lecture	1-day seminar	Multi-day seminar	Conference with multiple concurrent sessions	Web-based Self-paced instruction
	1	2	3	4	5					
	1	2	3	4	5					
	1	2	3	4	5					

### SCHEDULING

#### *Time of Year*

We can attempt to schedule seminars at the time of year that best fits your schedule. Please rate from 1(best) to 3(worst) each month as to the ease with which you and staff would be able to attend a training session by circling the number

	Best		Worst
January	1	2	3
February	1	2	3
March	1	2	3
April	1	2	3
May	1	2	3
June	1	2	3
July	1	2	3
August	1	2	3
September	1	2	3
October	1	2	3
November	1	2	3
December	1	2	3

#### *Days of week*

Is one day of the week better than another for you and your staff? Please rate the days 1 to 3 by circling the number

	Best		Worst
Monday	1	2	3
Tuesday	1	2	3
Wednesday	1	2	3
Thursday	1	2	3
Friday	1	2	3

#### *Time of Day*

Is there a particular time of day that would be more convenient?

	Best		Worst
Morning Only	1	2	3
Afternoon only	1	2	3
Full Day	1	2	3
Evening	1	2	3



**YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Some of our best training sessions are the results of recommendations from our customers about speakers or sessions they have seen in other areas. Please recommend any of these by filling in the information below.

Topic	
Name of Presenter	
Contact information (address, phone, E-mail)	
How did you learn of this presentation?	

Topic	
Name of Presenter	
Contact information (address, phone, E-mail)	
How did you learn of this presentation?	

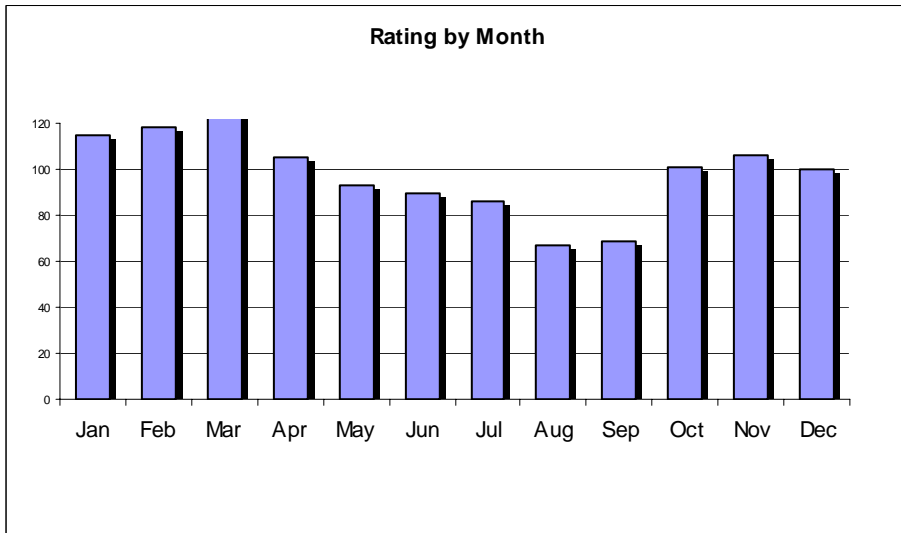
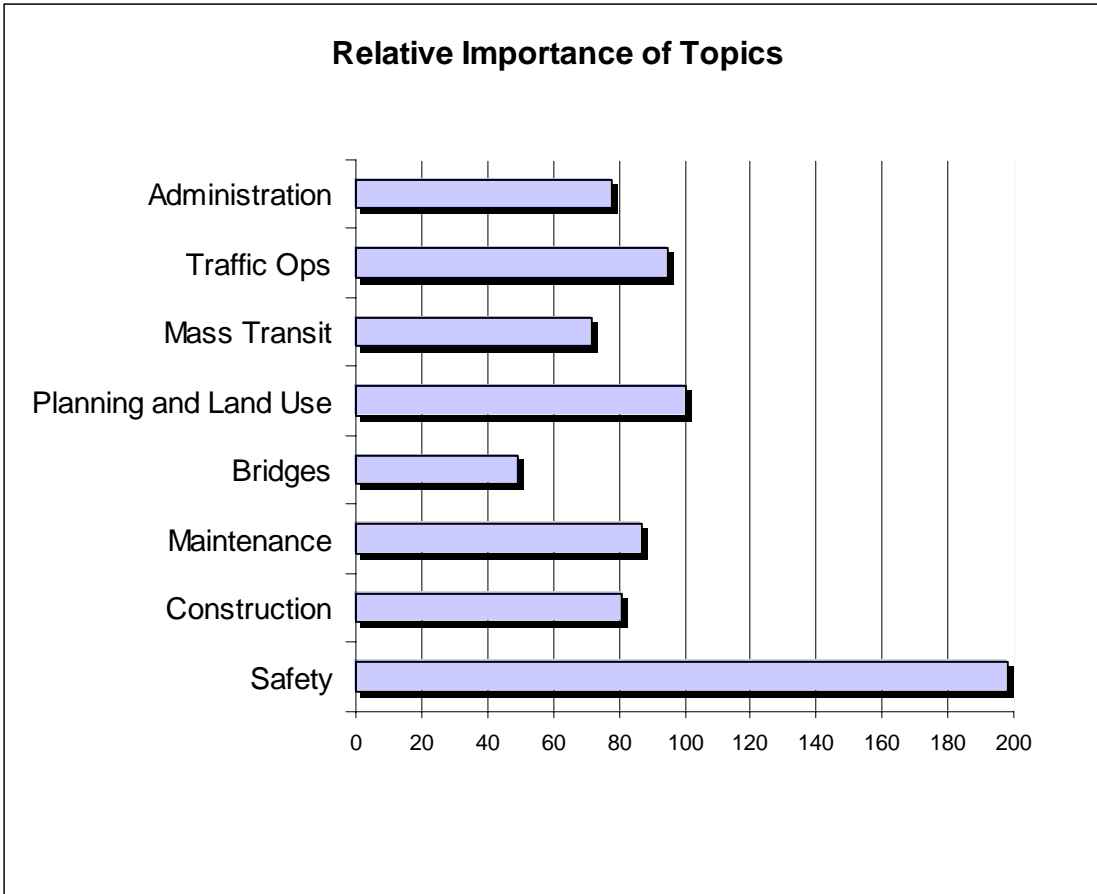
Topic	
Name of Presenter	
Contact information (address, phone, E-mail)	
How did you learn of this presentation?	

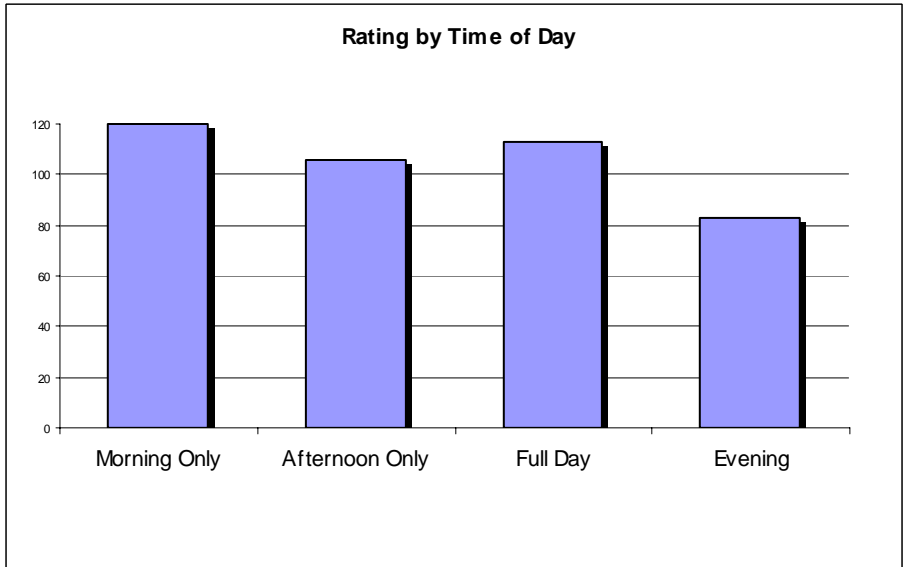
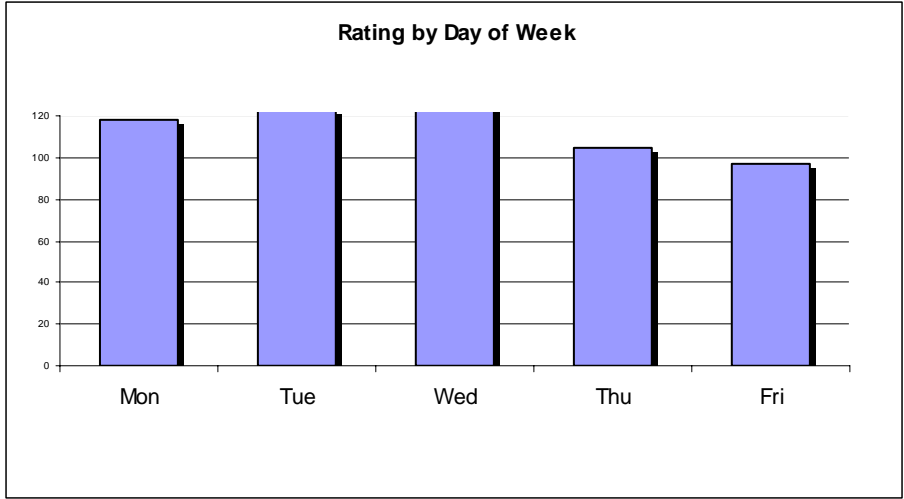
**OTHER ADVICE**

Please let us know other ways we can improve our service to you.

**OPTIONAL:** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form no later than [date] to:  
Delaware T<sup>2</sup> Center, 360 DuPont Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716**





## Format Preferences

Format	Topic	Average of Percentage
<b>1-day seminar</b>	Administration	68.42%
	Bridges	25.00%
	Construction	54.55%
	Maintenance	52.38%
	Mass Transit	47.83%
	Planning and Land Use	45.45%
	Safety	53.33%
	Traffic Ops	55.00%
<b>Lecture</b>	Administration	15.79%
	Bridges	31.25%
	Construction	9.09%
	Maintenance	19.05%
	Mass Transit	26.09%
	Planning and Land Use	13.64%
	Safety	23.33%
	Traffic Ops	20.00%
<b>Multi-day seminar</b>	Administration	0.00%
	Bridges	18.75%
	Construction	27.27%
	Maintenance	19.05%
	Mass Transit	8.70%
	Planning and Land Use	31.82%
	Safety	20.00%
	Traffic Ops	20.00%
<b>Conference</b>	Administration	10.53%
	Bridges	12.50%
	Construction	4.55%
	Maintenance	4.76%
	Mass Transit	13.04%
	Planning and Land Use	9.09%
	Safety	3.33%
	Traffic Ops	5.00%
<b>Web-based</b>	Administration	5.26%
	Bridges	12.50%
	Construction	4.55%
	Maintenance	4.76%
	Mass Transit	4.35%
	Planning and Land Use	0.00%
	Safety	0.00%
	Traffic Ops	0.00%

## Appendix 3: Behavior Surveys (conducted by phone interviews and used in this study)

### Questions for Training Participants and their Supervisors Prior to Training

1. *How did you decide to attend this particular training session?*
2. *What information or skills do you expect to acquire by participating in this training?*
3. *Will the knowledge or skills gained in this training have a direct positive effect on your job performance? Explain.*
4. *Have you attended prior sessions offered through the T<sup>2</sup> Center? Was there a positive impact on your job performance? Give examples.*

#### ***(Supervisors only)***

5. *How many staff members will you be sending to this training? (Out of how many?)*
6. *How did you decide who to send?*
7. *What change(s) do you expect to see in the job performance of participants due to the training?*

## Questions for Training Participants and their Supervisors 3-4 Months following Training

(conducted by phone interviews and used in this study)

1. *Were you pleased with the training you and your staff received at the workshop?*
2. *What changes have you noted in you or your staff that you would attribute to the workshop?*
3. *Would you say your investment in this seminar in terms of time spent in travel and attendance provided a positive, neutral or negative return? Explain.*
4. *What changes should be made to this training to improve your return? (Venue, logistics, organization, content)*
5. *What follow up activity or training would improve your return?*

## Appendix 4: Forms for Long-term Use by DelDOT

FORM A: Goals (Behavior) Survey

FORM B: Reaction Survey

FORM C: Learning/ROI Survey

### Directions to use for FORMs A and B

At the beginning of the class: Distribute FORM A and allow time (10 minutes is sufficient) for all participants to complete the top portion and pre-class goals portion of the form and then the forms must be collected. ***Stress that names must be written on the forms so that they can be re-distributed at the end of the class and participants will have an opportunity to add to their goals list at that point, as well as state how well their needs were met by the course.***

At the end of the class: Re-distribute FORM A, along with FORM B, and allow approximately 15 minutes for participants to carefully answer all questions on both forms. Participants should receive their original FORM A (on which they had written their name at the beginning of the class), and in the right-hand column of FORM A, they are to indicate next to each goal listed to what degree this training has provided the knowledge the participant was seeking, as well as what, if any, positive effect they expect the training to have on their job performance. (If none, state why.)

Also distribute FORM B, so the participants can complete their reaction to the course format, etc.

### Use of FORM C:

Using the goals listed on Form A (Goals Survey), compile a complete list for the designated course and insert into Form C. Three months following completion of the course, send the Form C – Behavior/ROI Survey to each course participant, either by mail or electronically, asking that it be completed and returned within two weeks. Share this information with the participants' management to be used in determining any return on investment (ROI) gained through the training course.

**FORM A: GOALS SURVEY** – (course name) \_\_\_\_\_

It is important that this form be completed by each participant prior to the beginning of the class. *You are asked to write your name on the survey so that it can be given back to you at the end of the class for further information.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Have you had specific training in this subject matter prior to this course?    Yes    No

How did you decide to attend this particular training session?

- Web search                      Supervisor recommendation  
Newsletter/flier                Other (explain)

In the left-hand column below, please list *at least* three objectives or needs you expect to meet by taking this class. For example, from a course on reinforced soil slopes, an objective might be “To be able to choose the optimal reinforcing medium for slopes leading to various segments of State Route 1.”

**Pre-Class Goals**

1.

2.

3.

4.

**Post-Class** (How well do you believe this class will have helped you meet this goal?)

1. (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

2. (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

3. (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

4. (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

**FORM B: REACTION SURVEY/COURSE EVALUATION FORM**



**Course Title**  
**Course Date**  
 Instructor(s): Names

If you wish, you may write additional comments on the back of this paper.	<b>1</b> <b>Poor</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Adequate</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Good</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Very Good</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Excellent</b>
Command of the Subject					
Delivery					
Willingness to entertain questions					
Overall Course					
Handout Materials					
Agenda Topics (overall relevancy) <b>**Comment below</b>					
Meeting Space					

For me, the course was: \_\_\_\_ too advanced, \_\_\_\_ just right, or \_\_\_\_ too basic.

**\*\*Please comment:**

**What specifically did you like or dislike about the *format* of this course (lecture, case studies, etc.)?**

**What topics covered in this course were particularly important for you?**

Would you recommend the course to others? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

---

Areas of Interest for Future Training (please check):

- Statistical Design of Experiments
- Mechanically Stabilized Earth Walls/Reinforced Soil Slopes
- Maintenance Engineering Series/Certificate Program
- FE or PE Review Course
- Context Sensitive Design
- Part time Graduate Program

Do you have any suggestions for course topics? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Explain (using the back of this page as needed).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

**Form C – Behavior/ROI Survey**

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Attached is the list of goals expressed by participants in the training course [*course name*]. Please complete all areas of the table below, starting by choosing what you consider the top five learning goals you had for this course:

Top Five Goals	Statement of Goal	What, if any, change has resulted in your work, or that of your staff, as a result of this training class? If possible, indicate any savings recognized, in terms of time, money, etc.

Were you pleased with the training you and/or your staff received at the workshop?

Would you say your investment in this seminar in terms of funds spent in travel and attendance provided a positive, neutral or negative return overall?

What changes should be made to this training to improve your return? (e.g., location, time of week/year, organization, content, etc.)

What follow-up activity or training would improve the return on the investment you have already made in this training?

# **Delaware Center for Transportation University of Delaware Newark, Delaware 19716**

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