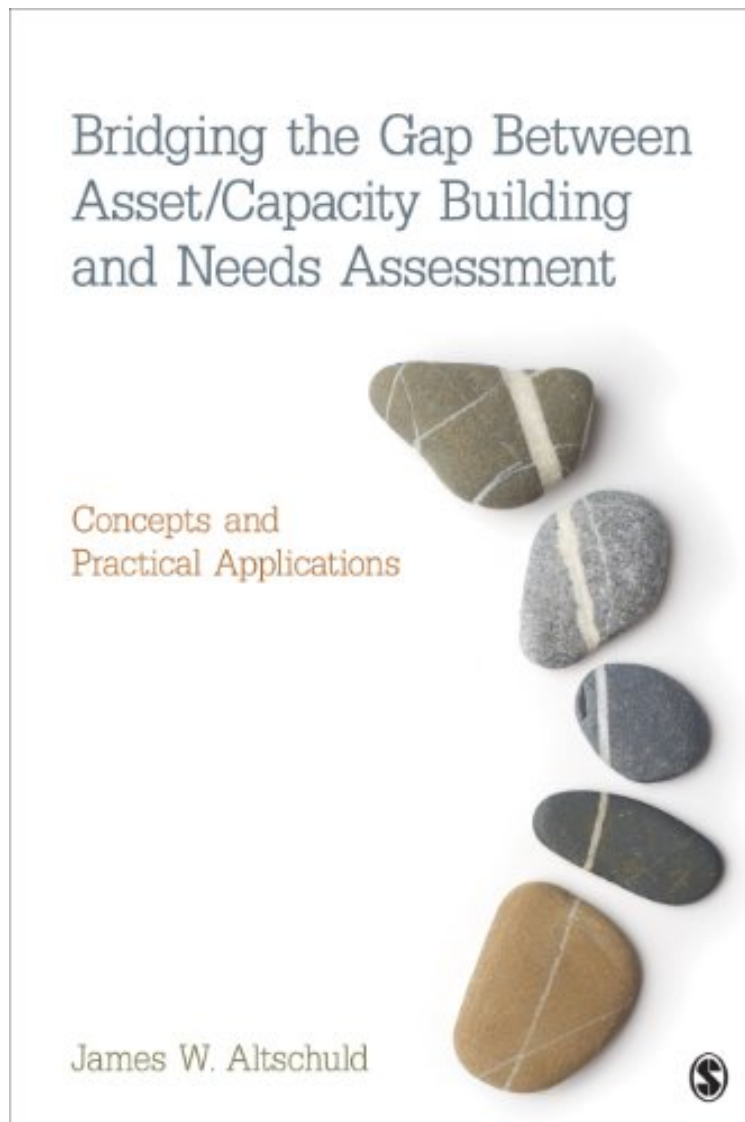


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Bridging the Gap Between Asset/Capacity Building and Needs Assessment: Concepts and Practical Applications

James W. Altschuld

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In the groundbreaking text, *Bridging the Gap Between Asset/Capacity Building and Needs Assessment*, James W. Altschuld examines the synthesis of two antithetical ideas—needs assessment and asset/capacity building. At the heart of this approach is a focus on assessing the strengths and assets that communities have and demonstrating how to make those assets stronger. The author explains the foundation of needs assessment and asset/capacity building, discusses their similarities and differences, and offers a new hybrid framework that includes eight steps for how they can be done jointly for better results. The author then applies a checklist for judging the quality of this approach to six cases that represent real-world applications of hybrid principles. The last chapter demonstrates how such efforts might be studied in the future, emphasizing ways findings and results from hybrid ventures can be used effectively. A wide range of examples, tables, and figures appear throughout, with insightful discussion questions at the end of each chapter to facilitate meaningful discourse.

“There is great tension between the two camps—and if this book can bring the two together to a certain extent it will be a valuable tool.” (Paul Komarek) “Building capacity is an important concept to develop in areas like Emergency/Disaster Planning and Community Relations. In addition to its scholarly value, it could be useful for practitioners too.” (Kenneth Goldberg) “The material reflects a strengths-based model that is among the best-practices currently available.” (Judith Birgen) “Combining two approaches that are complementary in many ways—novel idea, have not seen this proposed before.” (Brian P. Leung, PhD) “Highlights the value of both Needs Assessment (NA) and Assets Based Community Development (ABCD), moving beyond either/or thinking about the knowledge and skills that are needed to bring about community change.” (Barbara Soniat) “It provides a very good step-by-step approach to identifying community challenges and assets/capacities and how to develop plans to address them. Realistic and practical.” (Kenneth Goldberg) “The virtue of this text is that it is specific, sequenced, and offers a number of examples useful to students who find the content somewhat novel. For social work, students can bring this kind of text into the practicum environment and employ it as a road map for working with community members in completing projects. So, the text lends itself to project-based, problem-focused, and/or action learning. This is an asset.” (David P. Moxley) “I have seen nothing as thorough as this work. No one else synthesizes the material the way the author has done. I enjoyed the continuum from cooperation to collaboration and found the needs and assets discussions to be useful.” (Judith Birgen) “There is great tension between the two camps—and if this book can bring the two together to a certain extent it will be a valuable tool.” (Paul Komarek) “Building capacity is an important concept to develop in areas like Emergency/Disaster Planning and Community Relations. In addition to its scholarly value, it could be useful for practitioners too.” (Kenneth Goldberg) “The material reflects a strengths-based model that is among the best-practices currently available.” (Judith Birgen) “Combining two approaches that are complementary in many ways—novel idea, have not seen this proposed before.” (Brian P. Leung, PhD) “Highlights the value of both Needs Assessment (NA) and Assets Based Community Development (ABCD), moving beyond either/or thinking about the knowledge and skills that are needed to bring about community change.” (Barbara Soniat) “It provides a very good step-by-step approach to identifying community challenges and assets/capacities and how to develop plans to address them. Realistic and practical.” (Kenneth Goldberg) “The virtue of this text is that it is specific, sequenced, and offers a number of examples useful to students who find the content somewhat novel. For social work, students can bring this kind of text into the practicum environment and employ it as a road map for working with community members in completing projects. So, the text lends itself to project-based, problem-focused, and/or action learning. This is an asset.” (David P. Moxley) “I have seen nothing as thorough as this work. No one else synthesizes the material the way the author has done. I enjoyed the continuum from cooperation to collaboration and found the needs and assets discussions to be useful.” (Judith Birgen)

About the Author James W. Altschuld (PhD, MS, The Ohio State University (OSU); BS, Case Western Reserve University) is now Professor Emeritus in the College of Education and Human Ecology at OSU after 27 years of teaching research techniques and program evaluation. For the latter, he developed and taught a sequence of courses on theory, needs assessment, and design. He has authored or co-authored seven previous books—six were on needs assessment (four in the Needs Assessment Kit of 2010 and where he also served as editor for a fifth one), and one on the evaluation of science and technology education. In addition, he has written numerous articles and chapters on how to assess needs, as well as on evaluation research, practice, training, and credentialing/certification. He has presented nationally and internationally for over 40 years, given many workshops, and has been the recipient of local, state, and national honors including the Alva and Gunnar Myrdal Practice Award from the American Evaluation Association for contributions to the field of evaluation.