

Understanding and Assessing Need in Program Planning within the Context of Career Based Basic Education: Insights from the USA

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Overview/Purpose

- Various models
- All incorporate some understanding of “need”
- In differing order, they include need assessment; development; implementation; evaluation; in a continuous cycle
- This will focus on the idea of need which is different from need assessment

Key Questions

- What is meant by “need”?
- How does this affect programs?
- What are the implications of varying approaches to defining need?

What is a program

- Programs are diverse
- Include university courses; individual courses and full programs run by variety of institutions
- Developed through a variety of means but focus on a core idea of what is needed and how to provide it.

Program Planning Models

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Critiques of Diverse Models

- Focus on the issue of power – who decides on a program?
- How does this affect success?
- Who sets the criteria for success?
- Who decides what a “need” is?

Different meanings of Need

- Models predicated on some idea of what people “need”
- Need is a basic concept in adult education
- Many writers have called it a “fuzzy” idea

Types of Need

- Basic human needs
- Felt and expressed needs
- Normative needs
- Comparative needs

Basic Human Needs

- What individuals need to exist
- Deficit model – what are they missing
- Some think of this as basic human drives in the Maslow sense

Individual Wants and Desires

- Not considered a basic human need
- “Felt need”
- The educator assesses these to figure out programming

Normative Need

- Gap between what is desirable and what actually exists
- Deciding what is desirable is a value statement made by the educator in most cases or whoever is making decisions about programming.

Diagnostic Models

- McKinley divided models into three families dealing with individual and systemic needs
- Self-fulfilment Models – developing programs that will attract individuals. Meeting individual needs.
- Meeting needs of a segment of the community – illiterates, immigrants, refugees
- System discrepancy Models – look at needs of the social system

Confusions

- Confusion about the exact meaning
- Confusion about how to think about programs
- Systems do not have needs and cannot be educated
- Whose need is being served?

Values and Need

- Statements of need are essentially value statements – especially in thinking about systems or communities
- We think about needs assessments as neutral but they are politically charged
- We need to examine the premises of specific needs to better understand the inherent values

Organizations and individuals

- Within adult education, we need to think about individuals and about organizations
- Organizations also operate with conflicting values and approaches

Organizational Complexities

- Decisions about adult education are made by different organizations
- These include human service organizations (NGOs and philanthropic groups)
- Hasenfeld (2010) lays out the complexities and dualities of human service organizations.
 - Contradictions of agencies set up to “help” that also impose their own policies, rules and regulations on those for whom they were designed.

Case of Basic Job Training for adults US

- Will examine the general parameters in the US
- Different programmatic approaches
- Discuss the ways that need is envisaged

Job-training in the US - Overview

- No centralized system and variegated funding structures
- Variety of formats offered and plethora of degrees, certificates, certifications
- Vocational skills sometimes used to refer to this, more commonly (recently) used for programs for those with disabilities
- Basic skills studies shifting to vocational emphasis

Funding

- Federal initiatives focus on basic skills and career potential
 - Individuals receive some help if they are enrolled in the right program
- States and localities match federal funds
- Private foundations provide seed or experimental monies

Community Colleges

- Job training occurs in community colleges
 - Vocational programs such as heating, air conditioning, and ventilation
 - These programs result in AAS (Associates in Applied Science - http://www.cod.edu/programs/degree_programs.aspx); certificates of Study (http://www.cod.edu/programs/career_technical_programs.aspx)

Union Sponsored Programs

- Apprenticeships and job training
 - Joint apprenticeship program
 - Electrical workers union for example
 - <http://www.njatc.org/home.aspx>
 - Combination of classwork, on the job training,
 - Privately funded through the unions and other granting agencies

Joint union-employer programs

- Funded by employers and unions
- Sometimes focused on helping members find other careers
- Institute for Career Development (for steel and rubber workers) <http://www.icdlearning.org/>
- Focus on portable skills
- Partnerships with community colleges and online universities such as the University of Phoenix

Community-Based/Religious Organizations

- Salvation Army
- Jane Addams Resource Corporation (<http://www.jane-addams.org/>)
 - **Class work and on the job training, full time**
 - **(Basic) training; combined with counseling**
 - Programs: job training and development (esp. manufacturing/CNC, welding, bridge programs); family center; ...
 - Decentralized funding

Purposes

- Aid in Job Acquisition
- Identify best ways to acquire skills needed for job acquisition
- Identify areas where workers are or will be needed
- Develop ways to acquire skills
- Develop programs that will keep participants and help them to identify skills

Model

- Will look at one model and one specific program that have some federal funding
- One-stop Career Centers
- Career Pathways
- I-BEST Program in the state of Washington

One-Stop Career Centers

- Part of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998
- Centralized centers that could deliver workforce training services
- Based on four principles: Universal Access; customer Choice; Service Integration; and Accountability (Imel,1999)

New Imperatives: Career Pathways

- Focus on this issue since at least 1990s
- Concern with lack of clarity for career pathways
- Makes investment in higher education difficult, especially for adults
- Model makes explicit connection between career pathways and welfare (Alssid et al., 2002)

Model

- 16 career clusters with prerequisite training - <http://www.careertech.org/career-clusters/glance/careerclusters.html>
- Federal funding for students when programs can prove the career track is filling a gap
 - Child care
 - Stipends

I-Best Model

- Integrated Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Skills Training
- ABE instructors and vocational skills faculty design and teach community college occupational classes together
- Predicated on research showing that ABE students who go on to college and stay a year, finish

Issues and Problems in U. S.

- Lack of coordination
- Lack of career pathways and ultimately jobs
- Lack of appropriate training for jobs
- Deskilling of the workforce
 - Pay less for skilled jobs
 - Squeezing unions out through low pay and unwillingness to negotiate
- Lack of consensus about what makes a good educational experience

Problems

- Need is identified by researchers and politicians
- Programs must bend to their whims
- Participants have little say
- Funding is highly contingent and contested
- Some researchers (Heckman e.g.) say that money is better spent on children

Implications

- Problems for Community-based programs
- This model demands a higher education component
- Community based programs need to move to collaborations or partnerships if they use any federal funding
- All adult education funding is now tied to careers

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