

Shibboleths in planning theory: How outmoded beliefs and practices constrain autonomy and radical innovation in adult education

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Why we need radical innovation in adult education

- We are living in perilous times.
- We are dependent on a fragile global economic system.
- Violence/wars have dramatic “spill-over” effects.
- Environmental degradation/climate change at “tipping points.”





Barriers to radical innovation in adult education

- Institutional inertia
- Funding shortfalls
- Policy constraints
- Political risks
- Failure of imagination
- Outmoded beliefs & practices.



Shibboleth defined:

"...a custom, principle or belief distinguishing a particular class or group of people, especially a long-standing one regarded as outmoded or no longer important."

Source: Oxford Dictionaries (online)



Shibboleth #1

- That programs are more likely to be innovative and effective if designed using a planning model.



Shibboleth #2

- That adult learners are the best source of insights into their own learning needs.



Shibboleth #3

- That learning outcomes/objectives are the best way of representing our intentions and are essential tools in program design.



Basic Elements of Program Planning



Clarify Intentions

- Objectives
- Purposes
- Processes
- Content
- Benefits
- Outcomes
- Combinations
- Others . . .

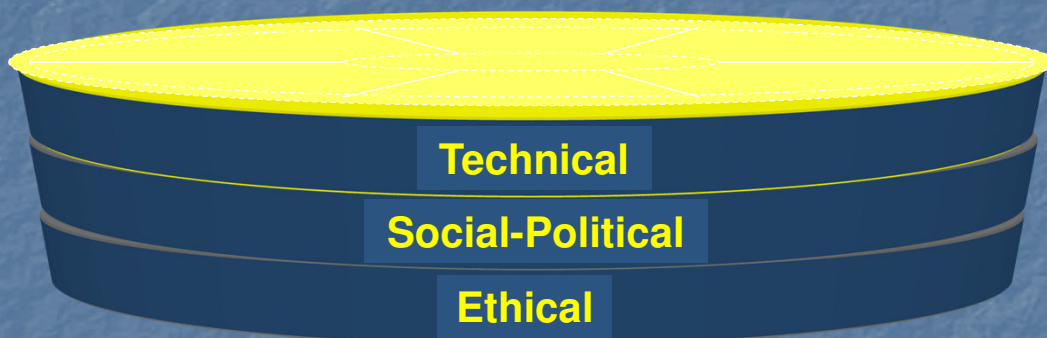


Different Forms of Objectives

- Tyler's approach
- Mager's approach
- Gronlund's approach
- Gagne, Briggs & Wager's approach



Three Domains of Program Planning



Shibboleth #4

- That determining the degree to which objectives have been achieved should be the primary focus of evaluation activities.



Shibboleth #5

- That substantively democratic/inclusive planning processes produce the best programs.



Closing thoughts...

- Innovative thinking and bold actions required by adult educators.
- Sophisticated set of planning tools essential.
- Professional judgement necessary for effective practice.
- Balanced attention needed to the technical, social-political and ethical domains.



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