An Adult Education Programme Planning Model

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Definitions

A programme planning model is defined as "a set of steps, tasks, or decisions which, when carried out, resulted in the design of an educational programme for an adult client group" (Buskey and Sork, 1982, p. 2).

Programme development is defined as:

"... the art of designing and implementing a course of action to achieve an effective educational program. This simple definition implies that the continuing educator is involved in reaching decisions through the implementation of a rational planning or developmental model. However, it should be recognized that a completely rational model is rarely, if ever achieved in the practical world of planning with people. The challenge is to achieve the most effective effort possible. This achievement is made possible by following the most appropriate practices and procedures that allow for utilization of the concepts implied in an acceptable program development framework" (Boyle, 1981, p. 42).

There are some universal components of the programme planning process.

"These components include a description of the needs of individual adult learners and learner groups, a statement of program objectives, and a description of educational strategies to achieve the stated objectives and to fulfill the stated needs. Moreover, this planned program reflects the nature and capabilities of the adult education organization, the nature of the learners and learner groups, the content area(s) involved, the support structure(s), to be used in program design and implementation, and a description of evaluation and accountability strategies" (Boone, 1985, p. 5).

There is a great amount of adult education programme planning literature in the United States which would render the selection of one model for a specific need very difficult. There are more than ninety different models and each advocates a number of steps which differ in detail and complexity. Moreover, there is little cross-referencing between the models or

cumulative development (Sork and Buskey, 1986, pp. 91-92).

John H. Buskey and Thomas J. Sork have simplified the process of selection between models. They studied approximately ninety models and classified them by planning context, level of programme emphasized, client system orientation, theoretical framework, and comprehensiveness. The resulting grid they developed, their commentary on the programme planning literature, and their development of a generic programme planning model (Buskey and Sork, 1982; Sork and Buskey, 1986; Buskey, 1987) is an important contribution to adult education programme planning literature.

Edgar J. Boone (1985) made an impressive comparison between nine programme planning models that include eight American models by Beal, Blount, Powers, and Johnson (1966), Boone, Dolan, Shearon (1971), Boyle (1981), Houle (1972), Kidd (1973), Knowles (1970), Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958), and Tyler (1971) and one model by the renowned Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Freire (1970).

Similarities and Differences Between Models

An examination of the published planning models in the United States reveals that there are similarities between the models.

"... All of them have basic programs/ processes of educational development in which the following elements are present: (1) problem/need identification; (2) setting of objectives, goals and means; (3) some formal or informal learning activity; and (4) either an explicit or implicit evaluation." (Boone, 1985, p. 34).

Other similarities are that most models are based on social and educational philosophies and are concerned about the needs and interests of the clientele (Boone, 1985, p. 34). Sork and Buskey (1986) concur that the differences between model are more contextual than substantial. They find that "While applications in specific contexts or environments are important, the major steps in planning are applicable to all contexts" (p.93).

Although there are commonalities between the models, this is not to say that there are no differences between them or that they are perfect models. Buskey (1987) points out some weaknesses in the models. According to him, they generally lack a theoretical framework. Few of the models are comprehensive. Many do not give sufficient guidance on budgeting, administration, marketing, and promotion. On the other hand, their strengths lie in their analysis of "needs assessment, instructional processes, and evaluation procedures" (p. 114). The author believes that a synthesis of some reputable models may reduce some of the weaknesses stated above.

Boone (1985) recognizes differences between the models he compared in his book. "The differences in approach to programming seem to be more of degree than of substance, and the degrees of difference appear to lie primarily in two areas: the values or philosophy of the author(s) and the purpose(s) for which the model was developed" (p. 35).

An Adult Education Programme Planning Model

It is within the above context that this author synthesized six U.S. adult education programme planning models for potential use by the national universities of Egypt. The six models from which this model was derived are those of Boyle (1981), Houle (1972), Knowles (1970), Knox and Associates (1980), Sork and Buskey (1986), and Tyler (1949). The proposed model was revised by a panel of Egyptian experts and adult education practitioners. As Egypt is in need of a massive amount of adult education programmes to aid its development, the author believed that a framework for planning would assist novice programmers as they develop new programmes and gain programming experience.

The effective use of this model will depend upon the level of skill of programmers using it, their knowledge of the model's assumptions, and following of the recommended steps and key tasks.

A. Skills Required for programmers who apply the Model
1. Familiarity with recent programme planning literature.

2. Administrative skills such as planning, organizing, decision-making, and supervising.

3. Ability to work in a team.

B. Assumptions of the Model

Programme planners should reflect upon and answer the following questions at the outset of the programme planning process:
1. What is the extent of change that you want to expose the learners to?

   - What will you do to prepare the learners to cope with change?
2. What is the type of programme that you will develop?

   - Is it a problem-solving (developmental) programme?

   - Is it a programme to acquaint learners with knowledge and skills of a certain discipline (institutional programme)?

   - Is it a new or repeat programme?
3. Who is the learner? What is his/her profile?

4. To what extent are you going to involve the learner in planning the programme?

C. Steps and Key Tasks of the Model

The following steps and key tasks of the model are recommended. They may be implemented sequentially or simultaneously.

I. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Decide whose needs will be addressed: society, the learner, or the institution.

2. Decide the type of needs assessment to be used, for example, formal vs. informal, basic needs, normative, competency or felt.

3. Determine method of needs assessment, for example, survey, questionnaire, interview.

4. Draft instrument of assessment or select an available one.

5. Collect data.

6. Analyze and validate data; put in priority order, and examine alternatives.

7. Diagnose desired action.

   a. Is an educational programme necessary at all?

   b. What shape and form would an educational programme take?

II. ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMME CONTEXT

1. Specify *what* will be targeted for analysis, for example, the internal environment, the external environment, the learner, compatibility of proposed programme with institutional mission statement, internal or external constraints.

2. Determine the individual or team who will survey the environment.

3. Identify *how* the analysis will be conducted.

4. Collect data.

5. Based on data collected, decide if and how constraints can be overcome.

6. Based on data collected, decide whether or not to proceed with the educational activity.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A. Development of Objectives

1. Determine the learners' profile based on the needs assessment.

2. Write down objectives that include behavioural and content aspects.

3. Screen through the following filters:
   a. societal philosophy
   b. institutional philosophy and mission
   c. psychology of learning
   d. learner interest
   e. feasibility
   f. priorities

4. Relate objectives to assessment.

B. Selection and Organization of Content

1. Determine criteria for selection of content and learning experiences.

2. Select content and learning experiences.

3. Determine how to organize (sequence) content and learning experiences, for example, vertically and horizontally, chronologically, thematically, etc.

4. Determine how content and learning experiences will be delivered.

5. Place order for books, materials, and equipment.

B. Assessment of Educational Achievement

1. Determine standards to be used for judging success or failure of learners.

2. Determine the content and behaviour areas that need to be assessed based on the objectives.

3. Select and prepare instrument of assessment.

4. Check the instrument for objectivity, reliability, validity, and compatibility with objectives.

5. Conduct assessment and analyze results.

IV. Financial Development

A. Financing

1. Set financial goals based on a preliminary budget that indicates estimated income, expenses, and prospective number of learners.

2. Identify sources of financing, for example, student fees, grants from government, allocation from general funds, donations from individuals and corporations, etc.

3. Set plan to secure financing, for example, develop personal contacts, involve influential people and obtain their support, initiate the necessary paper work to request financing.

B. Budgeting

1. Develop budget based on estimated revenue, direct and indirect expenses in line with programme goals and objectives.

2. Obtain necessary budget approval.

3. Assign responsibility for authorized budget expenditures.

4. Determine limits to budget line items.

5. Determine degree of programme self-support and subsidy policy.

6. Determine basis for charging fees.

C. Accounting

1. Determine accounting standards and procedures that result in clear, complete, and accurate accounting and prevention of fraud (or use institutional policy).

2. Assign responsibility for the accounting process.

3. Plan for a CPA or an auditing committee to audit accounts at least once a year.

V. Development of Instructional Resources

A. Instructors

1. Determine criteria for selection, for example, sharing institutional philosophy, competence in subject area, effective communication, innovation, use of audio-visual aids, understanding the adult learner, adult education teaching experience.

2. Prepare job description, salary scale, and reward system (or use institutional policy).

3. Advertise positions.

4. Interview and select instructors.

5. Plan orientation programme and in-service training.

6. Set plan to assist, supervise, observe, evaluate, and reward instructors (or use institutional policy).

B. Support Staff

1. Select/train support staff that have an understanding of the psychology of adult learners and who treat adults pleasantly, efficiently, and respectfully.

2. Train support staff in admissions, registration, and placement procedures.

3. Train support staff to provide quality service in preparing instructional materials requested by instructors.

4. Train support staff in good inter-departmental communication.

C. Physical Facilities

1. Try to establish a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere for adults in classes, for example, good lighting, comfortable chairs, restroom facilities, accessibility to transportation, adequate parking, etc.

2. Assign adequate space for admissions, registration and placement tests (if necessary).

3. Consider utilizing the learning centre (if there is one) for adults.

4. Schedule the physical facilities to meet the needs of learners, instructors, and the institution in a way that helps meet programme objectives.

5. If necessary, check into the possibility of renting or borrowing facilities from the neighbourhood or other institutions.

D. Scheduling

1. Plan schedule around an institution's standard or fixed format if that is required.

2. If not, select best possible scheduling alternative for the particular educational activity in terms of length of programme, length of sessions, maintaining variety and interest, time of day, time of year, etc.

3. Fit optimum scheduling with learner convenience, available instructors, and physical resources.

VI. Promotion and Marketing

1. Bearing in mind the target clientele identified earlier, design overall promotion and marketing plan for the year which includes budget, methods, schedule, responsibilities, coordination with agency's marketing activities and objectives.

2. Implement the plan at the right time and place.

3. Evaluate the promotion and marketing plan and modify it as necessary.

VII. Programme Evaluation

1. Set criteria for evaluation, for example, effectiveness, quality, suitability, contact, importance of programme to learners.

2. Develop evaluation plan.
    a. Select type of evaluation, for example, formal, informal, formative, summative.
    b. Set budget for staff, supplies, interviews, and data collection.
    c. Decide what data to collect.
    d. Assign who will collect data. Include people who are involved in the programme and those who will be affected by results.
    e. Decide when and how frequently data will be collected.
    f. Collect data.
    g. Analyze and interpret data.
    h. Report findings in ways that are understood by the audience.

3. Implement programme improvements based on evaluation.

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