

# Promoting and Provoking Innovation in Program Planning – A Comparison of North American and German Perspectives



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## What do we mean by innovations?

- The term ‚innovation‘ is excessively (and even abusively) used today. It often seems to mean only something ‚new‘ or ‚different‘
- Innovations for Schumpeter (1982, p. 132) are: „the doing of new things or the doing of things that are already done, in a new way“
  - New content or new perspectives (‘things’)
  - New methods (‘ways’)



## Innovations in Germany

- Traditionally interests in strengthening the public responsibility for AE. Program research as a combination with statistics. In-depth insights into content and knowledge.
- Elaboration of the method program analysis over time.
- Circle models out of management literature vs interactive knowledge island model out of educational research
- Widening of the field over the years
- Partly a lack of general transfer into continuing training of adult educators & program planners

## Comparison from a German perspective

- **State – Market – Movements:** Public responsibility for AE differs. This makes it partly also understandable that the research focus is often on learning in North America, while it is rather on education in Germany.
- **Models:** Richness of models for program planning in the US (considering US models in German research).
- **Method:** Richness of program analysis in Germany (making a program analysis in the North America?).
- **Comparison:** Widening the scope beyond bilateral comparison?

## Timeline of innovative thought in North America

- 1950s—Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* & Knowles' *Informal Adult Education*
  - 1960s—The 'Objectives Movement' gains momentum  
Mager's *Preparing Instructional Objectives*
  - 1970s—Knowles' *Modern Practice of Adult Education*,  
Houle's *The Design of Education*, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (in English)
- Evaluation models proliferate with focus on documenting the value/impacts of programs.

## Timeline of innovative thought in North America (continued)

- 1990s—Cervero & Wilson's *Planning Responsibly for Adult Education* & Caffarella's *Planning Programs for Adult Learners*
- Early 2000s—Case studies of planning process focusing on negotiation of power and interests
- 2015—?

## Disruptive ideas about planning in North America

- That “planning in practice” **does not** correspond to any model; it is always highly interactive, context-specific and iterative. (Pennington & Green, 1976)
- That assumptions underlying planning (including “andragogical planning”) are often **not** confirmed by research. (The ‘Andragogy Debates’ see Davenport & Davenport, 1985)
- That the technical-rational focus of many planning models neglects the social-political and ethical dimensions of practice. (Cervero & Wilson, 1996; Sork, 1997)

## Disruptive ideas about planning in North America (continued)

- That a “capable planner” must possess a broad range of abilities and the capacity to constantly adjust planning to changing circumstances...the interactive, iterative nature of planning (Caffarella & other authors)
- That a “gender blindness” in North American literature potentially limits its relevance (Sork, 2000)

## Comparison from a North American perspective

- North American (NA) researchers lack the archival data available in Germany
- NA researchers have focused on understanding the process vs the products of planning
- NA emphasis on the social dynamics of planning has focused on “micro-politics” rather than “macro-policy”
- NA training has largely been post-graduate whereas in Germany training starts earlier!

## Questions and discussion...

- What comparative research projects might yield useful insights?
- What should we be teaching about program planning as it is understood outside our own cultural context?
- How well do current competency frameworks for the preparation of adult education professionals incorporate comparative perspectives?
- How are larger/broader conversations and debates in the social sciences likely to influence our understanding of program planning?

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