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AUTHOR	Paprock, Kenneth E.
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ABSTRACT

A study examined the situation-specific program development strategies used in 47 different settings in the southwestern United States from January 1987 to January 1988. Specialized and elite interviews were administered to program developers to identify the approaches that are being used and to determine how they relate to the approaches described in the adult education literature. The responses given during the interviews indicated that most of the programs for adult learners were focused on problem solving and information giving and were normatively defined by the sponsoring agency, with the program developer acting as a solution giver and resource linker. The information gathered during the interviews indicated that what is being practiced in reality is not what is prescribed by any one approach in the literature. It was hypothesized that program developers who state that theories and formulas in the literature do not always apply in their situation may have factors and forces in their situation that may call for adjustments or modifications of the approaches advocated in the literature. The interviews conducted would seem to indicate that program development can be viewed as a process used to link various agent and client systems for the deliberately undertaken action of learning. (MN)

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: A DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE RELATED TO THEORY

by Kenneth E. Paprock

The title of this conference is "Teaching Adults: Myths and Realities." A typical definition of a myth in a standard dictionary would likely refer to a tale or fable having a supernatural frame of reference which serves to sanctify some concept, technique, institution, or natural phenomenon. The "tales" in our frame of reference would be the "knowledge" available to the student and practitioner in adult education, mostly in the form of widely varying prescriptions. These prescriptions, in turn, are based on an equal variety of relatively culture-bound theories. The essential problem is simply that ignorance of these theories does not prevent success in teaching adults. This suggests, at the very least, that these theories and prescriptions need to be carefully examined to find out why.

In <u>Alice in Wonderland</u> Humpty Dumpty says to Alice, "When I use a word it means just what I choose

KENNETH E. PAPROCK is assistant professor of Adult and Extension Education in the Interdisciplinary Education Department of Texas A&M University.
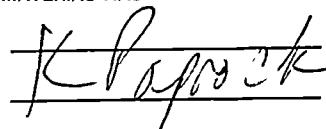
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it to mean - neither more nor less." Alice's reply is, "The question is whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"Program" in adult education is one of those elusive terms that can mean anything one chooses it to mean - a curriculum, a course, a short term learning experience. Moreover, theoreticians and practitioners generally do not agree on a single process by which educational programs for adults should be planned, organized, and evaluated.

Pennington and Green (1976) found that program developers use the language of the "classical model" to label their planning actions even though their personal values, environmental constraints, available resource alternatives, and other factors impinge on the program development process. The model to which Pennington and Green refer is a blend of those linear models presented by many writers in the field such as Tyler (1950), Houle (1972), Knowles (1980), Verduin (1980), Boyle (1981), and others.

According to Brookfield (1986) practitioners have stated that theories and formulas in the literature and taught in adult education curricula do not always apply

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in their situation. As a result of interviewing several hundred adult and continuing educators about their actions in designing and implementing programs, Farmer pieced together the various descriptions and designed a situational model (Farmer, Buckmaster, and LeGrand, 1988) that can be used to relate variables of which each combination is described by theoretical literature. This article presents a description of program devei pment efforts using this situation-specific approach model in forty seven different settings in the Southwestern United States during January 1987 to January 1988.

Program developers were interviewed using specialized and elite interviews (Dexter, 1970) to gather information which describes the approach or combination of approaches they use in their particular situation. The purpose of this study is to see what approaches are being used in practice and how they relate to the approaches in the adult education literature.

<u>Value</u> <u>or</u> <u>Worth</u> <u>of</u> <u>Program</u>

<u>Focal</u>   Situation Needing   1. Content or increased culture
<u>Point</u>   Education   2. Problem-solving
                                 3. Increased Meaning

<u>Actors</u>   AGENT   CLIENT   AGENT   CLIENT   TRANSACTIVE
           Alone   Alone   Client Agent

<u>Needs</u>   Normative   Expressed   Felt   Comparative

<u>Change Agent</u>   Solution   Resource   Process   Catalyst
<u>Roles</u>   Giver   Linker   Helper

Figure 1. Main Factors to be Considered in a
Situation-Specific Approach to Designing and
Implementing Continuing Education (adapted from
Farmer, Buckmaster, and LeGrand, 1988)

Planning Context

This dimension is defined as the environmental or

organizational setting in which the program development

model was intended to be used. This list uses the six

categories defined by Sork and Buskey (1986) and two

additional. These are: (a) Adult Basic Education (ABE),

(b) Continuing Education in the Professions (CEP),

(c) Continuing Higher Education (CHE), (d) Cooperative

Extension Service (EXT), (e) General Adult Education

(GAE), (f) Training in Business, Industry, and

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Government (TNG), (g) Community Development (COM), and (h) Religious Education for Adults (REL).

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Interviewees Classified by Planning Context

Category	Frequency	Percentage
ABE	4	8.5
CEP	7	14.9
CHE	5	10.6
EXT	3	6.4
GAE	11	23.4
TNG	6	12.8
COM	6	12.8
REL	5	10.6
Total	47	100.0

Situation-Specific Approach

Value or Worth of Program: Apps (1973) has identified basic purposes of adult or continuing education. They represent critical choices for the program

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developer as to the direction he or she would like the efforts to take. These purposes focus on (a) content or increased culture, (b) problem-solving, and (c) meaning in life through self-actualization or by helping or through helping person(s)· understand and cope with negative situations that will not improve.

Table 2

Response Patterns for Value or Worth of Program

Purpose(s)	Frequency	Percentage
Content	8	17.0
Problem-Solving	17	36.2
Self-actualization	2	4.3
Content/Problem-solving	9	17.0
Content/Self-actualization	2	4.3
Content/Problem-Solving/ self-actualization	6	12.8
Problem-solving/Self- actualization	3	6.4
Total	47	100.0

Client System Orientation: This factor describes the program development effort as it is oriented with priority on the client or agent (Schroeder, 1980; Sork and Buskey, 1986). The following orientations are used here: (a) AGENT(S) alone, (b) CLIENT(S) alone, (c) AGENT(S)-Client(s) (Houle, 1972), (d) CLIENT(S)-Agent(s) (Knowles, 1970, 1980), (e) Transactive (Friere, 1972; Farmer and Knox, 1977).

Table 3

Responses to Client System Orientation

Orientation	Frequency	Percentage
AGENT alone	17	36.2
CLIENT alone	0	0
AGENT-Client	15	31.9
CLIENT-Agent	5	10.6
Transactive	4	8.4
AGENT-Client/Transactive	2	4.3
AGENT alone/AGENT-Client	2	4.3
AGENT alone/AGENT-Client/ CLIENT-Agent	1	2.1
All	1	2.1
Total	47	100.0

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Needs: The concept of need is based on Bradshaw (1974) who presents four separate definitions. He presents a taxonomy which demonstrates that there may be an inter-relationship of the four definitions. That is, needs may overlap and the problem faced by the program developer is to look at the presence or absence of particular needs in that combination and decide exactly what part of the total is appropriate to try to meet.

The four categories of needs are the following: (a) Normative, what experts define as the needs to be addressed (Houle, 1972), (b) Felt, those that clients identify as what they think they need (Friere, 1972; Knowles, 1980), (c) Expressed, requests from clients for services as indicators of what is needed (Knowles, 1980), and (d) Comparative, gaps may be noted between services provided in one setting and that offered in a similar setting (Houle, 1972; Friere, 1972).

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Table 4

Responses to Needs Addressed

Need(s)	Frequency	Percentage
Normative	16	34.0
Expressed	1	2.1
Felt	1	2.1
Normative/Expressed/Felt	8	17.0
Normative/Comparative	5	10.6
Expressed/Felt	5	10.6
Normative/Felt/Comparative	1	2.1
Expressed/Felt/Comparative	1	2.1
All	9	19.5
Total	47	100.0

Change Agent Roles: The change agent roles in which
program developers see themselves in a particular
situation are based upon four roles described by
Havelock (1973). These four roles are as follows: (a)
Solution Giver, (b) Resource Linker, (c) Process
Helper, and (d) Catalyst. One or more of these roles
can be looked at in combination relating to the
particular situation.

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Table 5

Responses to Change Agent Roles Used

Role(s)	Frequency	Percentage
Solution Giver	9	19.1
Solution Giver/Resource Linker	4	8.5
Solution Giver/Resource Linker/Process Helper	7	14.9
Solution Giver/Process Helper	2	4.3
Solution Giver/Process Helper/Catalyst	2	4.3
Solution Giver/Resource Linker/Catalyst	1	2.1
Solution Giver/Catalyst	1	2.1
Resource Linker	4	8.5
Resource Linker/Process Helper	5	10.6
Resource Linker/Process Helper/Catalyst	3	6.4
Process Helper	2	4.3
Process Helper/Catalyst	2	4.3
Catalyst	1	2.1
All	4	8.5
Total	47	100.0

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Description of Practice

Much of the literature of adult education indicates
that adults participate in educational activities which are
relevant to solving problems or dealing with life tasks.
Well over half of the program developers interviewed
(73.9%) indicated that their programming efforts were
directed toward solving problems and/or life tasks.
Many of the programs focused on information or content,
at times in combination with the purpose of problem
solving.

The comparative study by Pennington and Green
(1976) found little evidence of needs assessment
existent. Many of those interviewed here have read and
are aware of the literature and the priority that the
clients needs have. Yet well over half (69.9%) never
used any form of needs assessment. Initially, most
(84.8%) planned programs addressing normative needs
usually of their organization, state government
requirements, or their own perspective of the
situation. Only after the educational program has begun
is the client questioned about his or her needs, but in
not all situations. As a result, in less than a third

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of the cases were there modifications to the program due to the expressed or felt needs of the client.

It would appear that although adults possess the maturity, experience, and orientation towards decision making and problem-solving, the educational environment has not been overly successful in manifesting changes that would allow or encourage participation of the adult learner in the program development process.

In essence these forty seven program developers exhibit Model I behavior as described by Argyris and Schon (1974). That is, in practice professionals define goals and try to achieve them without involving the clients in identifying or attaining those goals. In the situations in this study the initial orientation of the program developers (84.8%) is priority on the agency.

These program developers perceive themselves in the role of solution giver to their organizations and/or to the adult learner. As solution givers they also act as a resource linker using content specialist or experts to implement a program. To a lesser degree those interviewed also acted in the role of process helper. However, very few could see themselves as a catalyst.

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Conclusion

The concept of education is clearly the concept of a certain kind of purposeful activity. It postulates some degree of deliberate contrivance by the educator and conscious participation by the educand. Program development is a series of steps, tasks, or decisions which, when carried out result in the design of an educational activity for an adult client group.

In summary, from the descriptive findings of this qualitative study the pattern of practice in program developm : in educational programs for adult learners seems clear. Educational programs for adults are focused on problem solving and information giving, normatively defined by the agency, with the program developer acting as a solution giver and resource linker.

It would appear that what is practiced in reality is not what is prescribed by any one approach in the literature. It may well be that program developers who state that theories and formulas in the literature do not always apply in their situation may have factors and forces in their situation that may call for adjust- ments or modifications of the approaches in the literature.

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Program development can be viewed as a process used to link various agent and client systems for the deliberately undertaken direction of learning. Such a definition implies enough range to include the relationships among the diverse ways education for the adult client is organized. An adequate conceptualization of an area of practice as broad and varied as this requires a framework that depicts actions not tied to a particular institution or type of activity, but rather should focus on situations.

From the description of the programs in this study there does seem to be dominant approaches to program development in spite of the situation in real life. More research needs to be carried out to examine not only the steps used in planning, designing, and implementing educational activities for adults, but also to determine the effectiveness of such endeavors. It may be that the most important question that program developers can ask is, "Which messages do situations give me?" Instead of, "How do I want to change the messages so I don't have to change my approach?"

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THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FOR ADULT LEARNERS

1. The time-place dimension - Higher education for adults is very much the same as that offered to other students for credit. All that has been changed, in effect, is the time and/or the place.

2. The substantive dimension - Higher educations for adults is considered to be functioning in the substantive dimension when it has been developed to enable the college to meet a need in some manner which is not conventional by residential instruction standards.

3. The catalytic dimension - When the college, rather than reacting to expressed needs, assumes an active posture and seeks to bring about change, it is considered to be functioning in the catalytic dimension. Such programming may seek, for example, to bring about change by causing a community to assume responsibility for some problem.

(Adapted from C. H. Lawshe, "The Three Dimensions of Extension: A Conceptual Model," NUEA Proceedings, 1965, pp. 32-35.)

VALUE OR WORTH OF
CONTINUING EDUCATION

MAIN FOCAL POINT:

| Adult Education Situation |

1. Increased culture

2. Increased practical and/or problem-solving abilities

3. Increased meaning in life

ACTORS:

| AGENT(S) Alone | CLIENT(S) Alone | AGENT(S) - Client(s) | CLIENT(S) - Agent(s) | TRANSITIVE |

NEEDS:

| Normative | Expressed | Felt | Comparative |

CHANGE AGENT ROLES:

| Solution giver | Resource Linker | Process Helper | Catalyst |

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Reasons For and Against Adult Student Involvement
in the Development of the Curriculum

Pro: 1. To be able to identify and meet student needs.

         2. To obtain student perspective on objectives, subject matter
             content, and learning experiences.

         3. To motivate the students, for by incorporating students'
             suggestions the program becomes their own.

         4. To build upon experiences and expertise of the class members.

         5. To anticipate and resolve differences about new ideas and
             procedures you may wish to incorporate into the program.

         6. To build group morale and to provide a favorable climate for
             learning.

Con: 1. More efficient use of time in unilateral decision than in
             attempting to get group consensus.

         2. Students have had limited experience with subject matter.

         3. There may be diffusion of learning effort when the many interests
             of students are planned for.

         4. Students being adults do have greater resistance to change.

         5. Teacher's authoritative position may be threatened by exposing
             him to student-determined procedures.

THE NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS IN CONTRAST TO USUAL
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

ADULT LEARNER	HIGHER EDUCATION LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
Adult learners possess characteristics that are both similar and dissimilar to traditional learners.	Adult learners often are viewed as identical to traditional students and no program adjustments are made.
Adult learners need to be recognized, legitimized, understood and deserve institutional response.	Adult learners are often neglected; the image of college student is that of resident 18-24 year old student.
Adult learners are not a uniform type. They can best be characterized by their heterogeneity.	The campus environment treats all students — including adult learners — the same way.
Adult learners have developmental maturational skill building needs, as well as service needs.	Programs for adult learners frequently center on a narrow range of counseling and advising services.
Adult learner interests may revolve around multiple roles not necessarily centered on campus.	Competing priorities for students time are often seen as a lack of commitment on the students part to higher education.
Adult learners expect good teaching and structured identification of tasks and process.	Faculty care about good teaching but generally are not trained in teaching skills; class goals and tasks are not explicitly outlined.
Adult learners expect pragmatic vocational preparation and skill development that will lead to a good/better job.	Few attempts are made to relate classroom learning to vocational preparation or career applications.
Adult learners have many demands on their time and may need flexibility in schedules to complete assignments and requirements.	Programs and academic calendars are usually inflexible, are build around specific time lines (e.g. semesters) and assume full time study.
Adult learners live in communities away from the campus.	Programs and services are done primarily on campus. Facilities are services often are not available in the evenings or at satellited centers.
Adult learners have a great need for a clear, precise campus information system, both formal and informal.	The decentralized structure of most campuses means that information dissemination is scattered or frequently done by word of mouth.
Adult learners have a need for meeting places that afford social opportunities or are quiet settings for study and relaxation.	If such space exists, it often is only in one central place like a student union.
Adult learners have a need for opportunities often associated with residence on campus—more time with faculty, more intensive peer interaction time, and a closer integration of their living and learning experience.	Most opportunities to meet interpersonal needs are informal, outside of classrooms and require student initiative. Opportunities to establish relationships may be limited or non-existent.
Adult learners remain embedded within their peer of family culture/patterns.	Student services do not support family roles responsibilities and commitments.
Adult learners live in communities as citizens. Those communities place demands and responsibilities on students and therefore afford them citizenship rights.	Higher education tends not to acknowledge this citizenship as legitimate and does not assist in making linkages between classroom learning and these off-campus opportunities.
Adult learners have a rich array of prior experience in many life roles.	Curricula and courses usually assume no prior learning and/or do not incorporate prior learning into curricula content; advising process does not assist adult learners to relate prior learning to plan of study.
Adult learners have ongoing role/status transitions related to their education.	Support services provide a narrow range of assistance based on the needs of the 18-24 age group.

Adapted from Knefelkamp and Stewart (1983).