

In this context, the very existence of these grassroots organizations is already a laudable achievement. Hirschman enthusiastically believes that grassroots organizations hold promise for greater human and material development in the region. Despite the author's reservations in considering radical changes for the area, he can hardly refrain from showing his enthusiasm, born out of his personal experience with these organizations, in envisioning the potential prospects of grassroots development in Latin America.

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THE ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING OF ADULT EDUCATION

Theodore J. Kowalski. 1988. Albany: State University of New York Press

The book's main focus is the organizational context in which structured learning programs for adults are offered. Organizational theory is infused throughout, offering the reader a foundation for understanding the relationship of the sponsoring agency and the dynamics of learning activities.

The book is divided succinctly into four Parts: Organizational Context; Organizational Theory; The Planning Process; and The Future of Planning. The first two Parts provide a well-organized conceptual framework while Parts 3 and 4 discuss the basic elements of program planning. Using the organizational context, the reader will find practical suggestions for proceeding with tasks such as needs assessment, setting up advisory councils, budgeting, curriculum planning, and evaluation. The debilities of technical models are examined, and both linear and nonlinear paradigms of program planning are discussed. The final two chapters in Part 4—The Future of Planning—offer a summation, focusing mainly on how the future is apt to alter, even more, the challenges and responsibilities of administrators who select adult education as an occupation.

It would appear that this book has been written essentially for adult education programmers and administrators. They will find this to be a useful but not indispensable reference. The main strength of the book lies in the author's ability to convey the impact of organizational

variables on the program planning process. He shows the interconnectedness of learner needs, organizational needs, and environmental pressures with program planning. Because programs are developed in such a wide variety of institutions and environments, the author suggests that practitioners ought to have a thorough knowledge of their parent organization. A basic premise is that the organizational format for programming should reflect the values, needs and priorities of the parent organization: that is, adult education (as a subpart of the organization) should be congruent with its organizational environment. According to Kowalski, practitioners should not overly rely on what he calls "craft knowledge" (i.e. proven practices, tradition) but instead, attempt to refine their stock of craft knowledge by linking it with theory. In short, he advocates an approach to planning which integrates past practice with new knowledge and insights gained from reflection and systematic observations. One of the author's intentions here is to offer a solution to the theory-practice disjunction so often referred to in the program planning literature as an impediment to research.

While the author relies heavily on systems theory as the basis for his program planning model, neither planning itself or the concept of organization is reified. He does not assume, unlike many organizational theorists, that organizations are written into the natural order of things. One of the lingering problems in the study of organizations is that of understanding human intention and meaning. Part of the complexity in this problem is found in the observation that people can act purposefully and yet bring about consequences that are wholly unintended for themselves and for others. We live, work, and play. And in so doing we believe, assert self, establish order around us, dominate others, or are dominated by them. Action flowing from meaning and intention weaves the fabric of social reality. From this perspective, we may better understand organizations if we conceive of them as being an invented reality, an illusion that rests on a kind of social sleight-of-hand. It is true, as Kowalski's image confirms, that organizations often appear to be solid, real entities that act independently of human control and are difficult to change. Yet the paradox, one to which the author appears sensitive, is that the vital spark, the dynamic of organization is made from nothing more substantial than people doing and thinking. Organizations are limited by and defined by human action—a perspective the author could have injected into the discussion. By assuming a somewhat "scientific" view of the organization, the author overlooks the fact that organizations

are accomplished by people and people are ultimately responsible for what goes on in them.

The image one gets of Kowalski's kind of organization is that of a productive unit staffed by humans who are subsidiary to the organization chart and independent of it. Kowalski would have done better to acknowledge the competing notion that organizations are essentially expressions of human will, intention, and value. Moreover, good programming in adult education may not necessarily be the product of expert planning based on systems theory, but rather, the result of human desire, passion, commitment, competence and the ability to cope in the face of crisis and uncertainty. There is no ultimate reality about organizations, only a state of constant flux. Is this not true for adult education programs as well?

While Kowalski has done the field of adult education a service by writing this book—it will be of interest to academics, graduate students, and practitioners alike—the major flaw is in his normative and rather functionalist view both of organizations and program planning. Those who write and conduct research in the area of program planning, if they are to reduce the gap that has always existed between theory and practice, must begin to acknowledge that the study of administration and organizations is presently cast in a narrow mold. In the writer's opinion, adult educators have been unduly influenced by the scientific view of organizations whose experts claim that an objective view of the social world enables them to conduct value-free inquiry. They claim to possess knowledge that enables them to control organizations and to improve them. But such large claims appear increasingly unsound, for the science that justifies them rests on methods and assumptions that dismiss the central realities of administration as irrelevant. These realities are values in human action. The current overwhelming acceptance of positivist science in organization theory has led, regrettably, to an uncritical acceptance of systems models at the expense of human intention. One would have wished this otherwise well-written volume to reflect a more critical perspective of organizations. Notwithstanding this, the book fills a gap in the program planning literature and should appeal to a wide audience.

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