

Evaluation as Discursive Futures Research: A Contribution to Political Learning?

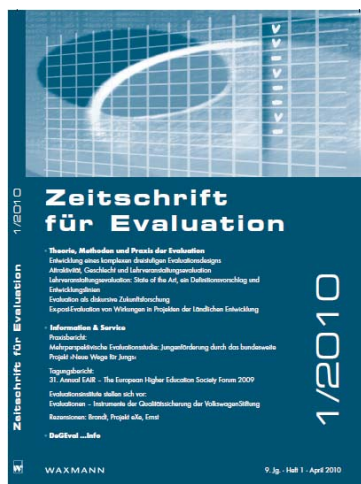
Silke Gülker

Social Science Research Center Berlin

Abstract

Can scientific evaluation support a process of political learning? This question is addressed from a theoretical and a practical perspective. To foster political learning, the interpretations of the actors involved become the object of evaluation themselves. On the other hand, by sharing local and implicit knowledge, local experts participate in the evaluation process as learning actors and discourse is used as method of research. Focusing the reform of German Employment Services which is a complex and disputed project, we invested in the design and implementation of a novel discursive procedure in order to evaluate this reform. About 150 representatives of the public and private employment agencies, firms, employers' associations and unions took part in an assessment exercise on the future of Employment Services. Alternating anonymous online questionnaires and discussions on a face-to-face basis, we followed a distinctive approach of evaluation. The discursive procedure lasted about nine months and opened up new perspectives on a particularly contested question, namely that of how to divide up tasks between public and private agencies.

Keywords: Evaluation, Futures Research, Employment Services,
Political Learning



Editors:

Prof. Dr. Reinhard Stockmann, Saarland University
(Editor in Chief)
Prof. Dr. Gerd-Michael Hellstern, University of Kassel
Prof. Dr. Helmut Kromrey, Berlin
Prof. Dr. Helfried Moosbrugger, J.-W.-Goethe-University FfM
Prof. Dr. Hildegard Müller-Kohlenberg, University of Osnabrueck
Prof. Dr. Dr. Christiane Spiel, University of Vienna
Prof. Dr. Hellmut Wollmann, Humboldt University of Berlin

Managing Editor:

Stefanie Kihm
Saarland University
Dep 5.2 – Sociology - P.O.-Box 151 150
D-66041 Saarbruecken - Germany
Phone +49 681/302-4328 - Fax. +49 681/302-3899
e-mail: redaktion@zfev.de - Web: www.zfev.de