Policy Analysis in Education
TE 919

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Class particulars:
Wednesday 7-9
111 Erickson Hall

Office Hours: Wednesdays before/after class and by arrangement.

Course Description

We focus on two interrelated topics that attempt to help you to understand policy analysis as something more than just a technical exercise:

• What are the various intellectual lenses adopted by policy analysts and what are the implications for both policies and classrooms and communities?

• How is policy generated, where does it come from, and how is it related (or not) to educational problems?

The first query is concerned with both the technical frames of reference used by analysts as well as their orientations to knowledge. What are the tradeoffs economists; political scientists, sociologists, ethnographers or schoolteachers bring to their analyses of policy? We will be considering recent research as well as policy analysis in process to get a sense of both the substance of policy and how people in our community are currently conceiving their own work. Local analysts can provide insights into their work on the math reforms in California, issues of gender and policy, choice and charters, literacy reforms, truancy policies, teacher education as a tool of international development, and policy and classroom practice (to name a few possibilities).

Discussions around the second question lead us to consider the links between analysis and policy generation. There is a distinct clash between normative and behavioral models of policy making--the way we talk and the way we act in the formulation of policy problems, their alternative remedies and implementation. Why do some claim that metaphors of gardening or sailing apply more appropriately to the construction and implementation of social and educational policy than do metaphors of strategic intervention?

We will explore the answers that policy analysts and their critics have offered to these questions. The course materials will consist of two sorts of readings: analytic pieces that exhibit or express answers to one or more of the queries above, and several cases that permit you to try out various answers in your own analyses. You will spend time in the library becoming familiar with a broad range of literature as you develop a case of your own from multiple policy perspectives.

The course satisfies one of the three "selective" courses required of all students in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Educational Policy as well as the separate program of Education Policy. Students from departments and colleges outside of education are most certainly welcomed.

Course Requirements

The course will be conducted as a seminar. This means you will need to have read and cogitated on the readings or issues at hand. Occasionally this means speaking up in class but always it means listening and considering what others say. Helping someone reformulate their ideas, questioning whether they meant what they said, and extending ideas is preferable to verbal combat.

Reading I will be distributing a CD with all the course readings that are not in the required books listed below. Student Book Store (SBS on Grand River) will have copies of Kingdon's Agendas, Alternates, and Public Policy, Tyack & Cuban's Tinkering Toward Utopia, Chubb & Moe's Politics, Markets and America's Schools, and Sutton & Levinson's Policy as Practice: Toward a Comparative Sociocultural Analysis of Educational Policy. Strongly recommended are Olssen, Codd & O'Neill Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship, & Democracy, Sabatier's Theories of the Policy Process, and Bobrow and Dryzek's Policy Analysis by Design . My suggestion is that you not buy these books until you see if the needed sections are not on the CD

Evaluation: You will be evaluated on your participation in class and discussion of course readings. In addition there are the following requirements:

- Commentary/responses to class and readings must be turned in no later than Wednesday by 12:00. Send me a copy of your response. There is a "Drop Box" on the courses Angel site but if Angel is too complicated just send it as an attachment with your name on the paper as well as the file's name. These responses provide opportunity for you to raise questions, offer interpretation about readings or class discussion, and ask for treatment of specific issues in class. In effect they provide an opportunity to check in and let me see how you are progressing. I will be copying your work for the rest of the class to read so be sure to make your thoughts readable and assume they are public. I expect you will turn in at least 4 commentaries during the semester. I would prefer setting up an Angel site for this work since it makes it easier for students to read each other's comments on line. While these are considered "weekly" you only need to send in 4.

- Individual policy analysis. Write on a policy problem of your own choosing or some aspect of it. In addition to your own take on the problem you will be expected to use at least one other model of analysis. So, if you see yourself as a sociologist trying to make sense of teacher induction policy you might also consider how an economist or Public Choice person might analyze the issue. If literacy reform is your passion, what are the competing arguments/ideologies that make for a "radical middle" in that policy war? If math education reform is your interest, plot out what the competing arguments are? Is No Child Left Behind going to help for hurt teaching and learning in our schools? In all these contested terrains, to what extent is politics and turf more important than teaching and learning?

- Analysis of partner's draft. Both the instructor and another student will be reading and responding to the draft of your individual policy paper. Much of your career will be spent helping/evaluating the work of others. This is a good time to start learning some procedures for such work.

- Process paper. This represents your cumulative thoughts on a hypothetical policy dilemma. You will provide wisdom for some policy maker on how they might best navigate the policy process based on the readings in this class.

The course grade will be determined as follows:

- Class participation   10%
- Journal on readings   30% (weekly, four times)
- Analysis of partner's draft   10% (due Nov. 15
- Individual analysis paper   30% (due before Nov. 21)
- Process paper   20% (due Dec. 6)

Course Outline

Week 1 (August 30):   Introduction and a Road Map

What is public policy and what makes a policy public? What is policy analysis and how does it differ from other forms of inquiry, analysis or research? We will talk over who we are, the course, and begin our discussion of how economists discuss educational issues. Readings for subsequent meetings will also be passed out.

I.) What is policy and policymaking?

Week 2 & 3 (Sept. 6 & 13): Policy Analysis from Multiple Perspectives

Choices about how to analyze public policies and issues, about the "best" design, are not so obvious as some might claim. As James Coleman noted more than 20 years ago, "There is no body of method; no comprehensive methodology for the study of the impact of public policy as an aid to future policy."

While there is no "right" way to generate good policy analysis, there are certainly better or worse choices. Often analysts draw on their own disciplinary background. Whatever the choice of design, line of questioning, choice of analysis, or method of presentation or dissemination, there are tradeoffs and satisficing, better and worse uses of argument and evidence to support analytic choices or conclusions.

The choice of analytic methods presents a key issue for policy analysis because the lens and the method the analysts uses determines to a large degree what they see, understand and might suggest as implications and solutions. There are a variety of lenses to use: disciplinary models, qualitative/quantitative distinctions, prior epistemological assumptions, and assumptions about the purpose of policy analysis. For the first few weeks we will be reading about the multiple lenses available to analysts and their implications. Several questions should guide your reading.

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each general approach against the realities of policy making and the policy process as you currently understand it?

- In what ways does the character of the policy process raise issues for analysis and the shape of choices for design?

- What skills are needed for the policy analysts? What perspectives?

Woodhall, Maureen, (1987). "Human Capital Concepts. In Economics of Education: Research and Studies," G. Psacharopoulos, ed., Oxford: Pergamon, pp. 21-24.

Levin, Henry, and Carolyn Kelly, (1994). "Can Education Do It Alone?" In Economics of Education Review, 13(2), pp. 97-108.

Lewis, Theodore, (1997). "America's Choice: Literacy or Productivity?" Curriculum Inquiry, 27(4), pp. 391-421.

Chubb, John and Terry Moe, (1990). Politics, Markets and America's Schools, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, pp. 1-68.

Ball, Stephen, Richard Bowe, and Sharon, Gewirtz, (1995). "Circuits of Schooling: A Sociological Exploration of Parental Choice of School in Social-Class Contexts." In Sociological Review, 43, pp. 52-78.

Astiz, Fernanda, Alexander Wiseman, and David Baker (2002). "Slouching towards Decentralization: Consequences of Globalization for Curricular Control in National Educational Systems," Comparative Education Review, 46(1), pp. 66-88.

Wells, Amy Stuart, (1996). "African-American Students' Views of Choice." In Who Chooses? Who Loses? Culture, Institutions, and Unequal Effects of School Choice. New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 25-49.

Recommended as help in understanding the underlying frames in economics and public choice arguments:

Bobrow, Davis and John Dryzek, (1987). Policy Analysis by Design, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 27-61. For an approach that takes up where Bobrow leaves off, I recommend

Olsen, et all, (2004) Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship, & Democracy. This can also be used for grads with an interest in an international perspective arising out of approaches by Foucault and others.

{Please realize this is two weeks of readings. It will take us a few weeks to learn how to discuss topics in an efficient and humane manner.)

Week 4 (Sept. 20) **Policy Analysis from Multiple Perspectives: Policy, Politics, and Social/Cultural Capital**

Putnam, R., (1995). "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," Journal of Democracy, 6(1), January, pp. 65-78.

Berliner, David and Bruce Biddle, (1995). "Why Now," in The Manufactured Crisis, Reading: Addison-Wesley, pp. 129-172. Or you might read "High Stakes Testing, Uncertainty, and Student Learning" to be found at http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n18.

Wraga, William, (1999). "The Educational and Political Implications of Curriculum Alignment and Standards-Based Reform," Journal of Curriculum & Supervision, 15(1), pp. 4-25.

In addition, I will be bringing readings on the politics of policy depending on your substantive issues. For example for literacy folks I'd suggest you head off to an Arizona lobby group's website (Arizona Parents for Traditional Education). For math curriculum policy arguments there's the "mathematically correct" website (ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mathman).

Recommended as help in understanding the underlying frames in social structure and political argument:

Bobrow, Davis and John Dryzek, (1987). Policy Analysis by Design, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 62-116. and/or Olssen, et al, (2004) Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship, & Democracy

Week 5 (Sept. 27): Modeling How/If Reform actually occurs

Tyack, David and Larry Cuban (1995). Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 1-59.

Swanson, Christopher, and David Stevenson (2002). "Standards-Based Reform in Practice: Evidence on State Policy and Classroom Instruction from the NAEP State Assessments," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24(1), pp. 1-27.

Linn, Robert, Eva Baker, and Damian Betebenner (2002). "Accountability Systems: Implications of Requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001," Educational Researcher, 31(6), pp. 3-16.

II.) Policy Analysis as the Argument Behind a Policy

Week 6 (Oct 4): Policy as Argument

Evidence offered in support of a policy position, or "proof" of a proposition, reflects a number of choices about such things as: instrument to measure, lens to view, or the logic of the analysis. Evidence, as a result, is socially constructed in much the same way, as are problems and solutions. While reading this week's assignment consider the following questions and make a list of questions you would want examined, in order to assess the validity of evidence provided.

• How can analysts and others view the same "facts" and reach different and conflicting conclusions?

• How is evidence constructed?

• What are threats to internal or external validity?

- To what extent does policy argumentation drift into parallel arguments involving differing rhetorics?

  Throgmorton, J. A., (1991). "The Rhetorics of Policy Analysis," <u>Policy Sciences</u>, 24, pp. 153-179.

  Rosen, Lisa (2001). "Myth Making and Moral Order in a Debate on Mathematics Education Policy," in Policy <u>as Practice: Toward a Comparative Sociocultural Analysis of Educational Policy</u>, Sutton and Levinson, Eds. Westport, CN: Ablex Publishing, pp. 25-58.

  Majone, G., (1989). <u>Evidence, Argument, & Persuasion in the Policy Process</u>, New Haven: Yale Press, pp. 1-68.

  Taylor, Barbara, Richard Anderson, Kathy Au, and Taffy Raphael (1999). Discretion in The Translation of Reading Research to Policy. <u>CIERA Report #3-006.</u>

  Adams, Marilyn, Barbara Forman, Ingvar Lundberg, and Terri Beeler, (1998). "The Elusive Phoneme: Why Phonemic Awareness Is So Important and How to Help Children Develop It," in <u>American Educator</u>, pp. 18-22.

Week 7 (Oct. 11): The Politics of Numbers and Words

Policy problems, policy targets and the categories used to devise and carry out policy are socially constructed and not necessarily "givens" or "objective facts." They typically denote important social needs, relevant definitions or markers, and strategic or politically or bureaucratically defined boundaries. As has been said before, what you see depends on where you sit. At the same time, what you take as the critical definitions can form the directions of analysis and shape the political implications of its proposed "solutions."

- Take any current reform with which you are familiar and chart the implications of changes in the definitions of who the stakeholders are. What if the definitions of minorities were altered?

- How do individuals construct "multiple definitions of self"?

- How might political pressures affect the value of data gathering?

  Hodgkinson, H., (1995). "What Should We Call People?" <u>Phi Delta Kappan</u>, October, pp. 173-179.

  Wright L., (1994). "Annals of Politics: One Drop of Blood", <u>The New Yorker,</u> pp. 46-55.

  Plank, David, (1997). "Dreams of community," <u>Expertise versus Responsiveness in Children's Worlds: Politics in School, Home and Community Relationships</u>, Maureen McClure and Jane Lindle, Eds. Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press, pp. 13-20.

  Stone, Deborah (2002). "Symbols" and "Numbers" chapters in <u>Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making</u>, New York: W. W. Norton Co, pp. 137-187.

III.) Looking for Orderliness in the Policy Process

Week 8 (Oct. 18):   The Players and Models of the Policy Process:
**   Origins, Rationality, Incrementalism and Garbage Cans**
Over the next few weeks we will be reading an analysis of the policy process. It provides an interesting effort to account for the unexpected route our efforts in public policy often take. While the discussion is at the national level, be sure to translate it down to other levels of the policy process. Consider the following questions as you read.

• How do these arguments translate to the district, school or classroom level?

• What are the implications for action in the policy arena? How might you position yourself to make the most of such a view of how policies are constructed, how "windows" are opened" or the value of position and presence in the process?

• Can you get beyond some readers' sense that Kingdon is "cynical" or "negative" about the policy process? (As you might guess, some folks have not.)

Kingdon, J., (1995). Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, Boston: Little,   Brown, and Co., pp. 1-164.

Gould, Stephen J., (1991). "The Panda's Thumb of Technology," in Bully for Brontosaurus, New York: W. W. Norton Co., pp. 59-72.

Recommended:
Sabatier's Theories of the Policy Process

Week 9 (Oct. 25): Policy Windows and Joining the Streams

In addition, across the next few meetings we will be considering the policy process via Kingdon.   At the same time examples of implementing change will be introduced as examples of how that process occurs in educational settings across multiple countries and communities.

Kingdon, J., (1995). Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., pp. 165-230.

Anderson-Levitt, Kathryn, and Ntal-I'Mbirwa Alimasi (2001). "Are Pedagogical Ideals Embraced or Imposed? The Case of Reading Instruction in the Republic of Guinea," in Policy as Practice: Toward a Comparative Sociocultural Analysis of Educational Policy, Sutton and Levinson, Eds. Westport, CN: Ablex Publishing, pp. 25-58.

Come prepared to discuss your policy case in terms of its policymaking process. Talk to policy analysts, interview people involved in the policy process and collect a genealogy of the policy you are focusing on (i.e. do some detective work).

Recommended:

March, James G. and Johan Olsen, (1983). "Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganization Tells Us About Government," in <u>American Political Science Review</u>, pp. 281-296.

Week 10 (Nov. 1): Difficulties of Balancing the Competing Claims in the Politics of Policy Generation

Cohen, David, and James Spillane (1993). "Policy and Practice: The Relations Between Governance and Instruction," in <u>Designing Coherent Education Policy</u>, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 35-95.

Pearson, David (1996). "Reclaiming the Center," in <u>The First R: Every Child's Right to Read</u>, New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 259-274.

IV.) The Problem of Implementation: What Happens When "the Rubber Hits the Road"?

Week 11 (Nov. 8): The Implementation Perspective

For some, "implementation" is a misplaced metaphor. It assumes that "there is a there." The perspective taken here is that policy is neither immutable nor certain in its nature or consequences. It is generated and altered through out the policy system--the federal, state, and local levels. Interesting to note is that the notion of policy differs at each level. As you read through this week's readings, take some policy reform you are familiar with and consider the following questions.

- Who are the major stakeholders/actors?

- What are their concerns?

- What resources and authority are available to policy makers and those responsible for carrying out policy?

- What are the effective incentives at each level of the system and how do they differ?

Further, consider the broader questions around the readings:

- What are some common processes and categories of implementation problems that emerge as policy is put into different institutional settings?

- Of what value is an "implementation perspective" to the policy maker?

- What are some dilemmas inherent in the implementation process?

- Do certain kinds of policies, or certain kinds of policy instruments, present particular kinds of implementation problems?

    Cohen, David, (1995). "What is the System in Systemic Reform?" <u>Educational Researcher</u>, 24(9), pp. 11-17.

Porter, Maureen (2001). "'We Are Mountain': Appalachian Educators' Responses to the Challenge of Systemic Reform,"" in <u>Policy as Practice: Toward a Comparative Sociocultural Analysis of Educational Policy</u>, Sutton and Levinson, eds. Westport, CN: Ablex Publishing, pp. 265-293..

McLaughlin, M., (1987). "Learning from Experience: Lessons from Policy Implementation," Educational <u>Evaluation and Policy Analysis</u>, summer, 9(2), pp. 171-178.

Elmore, Richard and Deanna Burney (1998). "School Variation and Systemic Instructional Improvement in Community School District #2, New York City," CPRE.

[Draft of analysis paper is due for reading/sharing]

Week 12 (Nov. 15): Implementation and Organization

Leaders, whether the President of the United States, the manager of Red Sox, or the principal of your local elementary school, enter their organizations with affirmations of the faith that things will be changed for the better and they will be able to change things. As we know, though, presidents can be stymied, principals overwhelmed with events, and managers dumped in mid-season. Some questions to ponder during this week's readings:

- What are the motivations for leaders declaring the need for change?

- What accounts for their inability, disinterest or forgetfulness in carrying through with their prior declarations for change?

- What are ways change can be viewed by those who are expected to participate in the changes?

    Bescholss, Michael (1997). <u>Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964</u>, New York: Simon & Schuster, (the conversations between Sargent Shriver and LBJ about setting up the War on Poverty), pp. 202-205, 208-210, and 333-335.

    McLaughlin, Milbrey, and Joan Talbert (1993). "How the World of Students and Teachers Challenges Policy Coherence," in <u>Designing Coherent Education Policy</u>, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 220-249.

    Cohen, David (1990). "The Case of Ms. Oublier," <u>Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis</u>, 12(3), pp. 327-345.

    [Analysis of partner's draft due--10%]

Week 13 (Nov. 22): Implementation, Politics & Work

At times organizations might appear impervious to efforts to change them. We might wonder:

- To what degree are some policy efforts contrary to the basic history, legal and cultural contexts?

- To what degree will the policy affect "us" rather than "them"?

- To what extent would you be willing to carry on with a policy change whether it has any observable effect or not?

  Cohen, David, (1984). "Policy and Organization: The Impact of State and Federal Education Policy on School Governance," Harvard Educational Review, 52 (4), pp. 474-499.

  Vinovskis, Maris, (1999). "Do Federal Compensatory Education Programs Really Work? A Brief Historical Analysis of Title I and Head Start," American Journal of Education, 107(3), pp. 187-209.

[Individual policy paper due before November 22nd --30%]

V.) The Problem of Change/Reform: Does it occur and so what?

Week 14 (Nov. 29): Change and its Perception

Changes occur, both in individuals and organizations, we can be sure. At times they're called "reforms" and at other times "failures." But just when and how they occur is often difficult to predict, much less manage. In addition to the usual statistics of the changing distribution of resources and human capital, subtle alterations in social capital are also observable. What it all means is another question.

- Consider as many outcome measures as you can think that might register change for the "better."

- Are there any new avenues for change that have not been tried related to education?

- Does change occur or not? What is your evidence?

  March, James G., (1981). "Footnotes to Organizational Change," Administrative Science Quarterly, December, pp. 563-577.

  Tyack, David and Larry Cuban (1995). Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 85-142.

Week 15 (Dec. 6): What Reforms Last: The Effects of Policy

Considering all the messiness of public policy and its likelihood for generating change for the better, we look now at suggestions of how to guess what policies might stick and which are "like leaves in the fall" and headed for the mulch pile. A simple question remains for the day:

- What is your source of optimism that educational policy can generate change for the better?

  Boyd, William, (1999). Paradoxes of Educational Policy and Productivity. Educational Policy, 13(2), pp. 227-250.

[Process paper due (20%)]
On or before Dec. 6