

EDPL 788S: Policy Design and Implementation

Fall 2005-2006

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Meeting Time: Mondays 7:00-9:45 pm
Location: Benjamin Building Room 2102
Office Hours: By appointment Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

Sources for required readings:

- EDPL 788S Course Reader. Maryland Book Exchange
- On-line readings. Linked to syllabus at <http://www.education.umd.edu/EDPL/faculty/honig>. Scroll down the page and click on the link to the course syllabus.
- Majone, G. (1989). *Evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Purpose

This course starts from the premise that a deep understanding of policy design, policy implementation, and relationships between the two is essential for educational leaders and policy researchers. After all, educational leaders of various stripes face significant demands to operate simultaneously as able producers and consumers of public policy. For example, school district central office administrators set policy for themselves and for schools and also act as agents of federal and state decisions; school principals, directors of youth agencies, program coordinators, and others both design and implement policy. Careful and useful policy analysis and other policy research provide rigorous examinations of policy design and implementation.

This course aims to build your understanding of policy design and implementation by focusing on the following issues and questions:

- Educational leaders may choose from a broad repertoire of policy goals, targets, and tools when designing policies. What are the options? What factors should educational leaders consider when selecting a course of action? What dimensions of policy and which evidence should policy analysts/researchers consider when studying policy design?
- For decades, research on policy implementation has sung a similar refrain: implementers avoid, recast, derail and only sometimes enact policymakers' intentions. What explains implementers' responses to policy? How shall policy analysts/researchers choose among explanations? What is "good" evidence of policy implementation? What are the implications for policy design?
- Just as policy designers and implementers face a variety of choices and constraints in policy processes, so too do policy analysts and researchers when it comes to developing, framing, and substantiating their own work. What are these choices and what factors constrain/enable those choices?

Course Goals

This course aims to strengthen your ability to:

- Design and analyze policy designs at various organizational levels
- Assess implementation opportunities and pitfalls in complex organizational settings
- Collect and use evidence about policy design and implementation to develop policy recommendations
- Speak and write knowledgably and well about current education policy topics (e.g., No Child Left Behind, curricular reform, high-stakes testing)

Scope and Structure

This course is divided into 3 sections that correspond with primary components of many pieces of policy analysis and other policy research:

In the first section, we examine policy design— specifically, policy goals, targets, and tools and relationships among them—and the factors that shape policy designers’ design choices. This section aims to provide you with a basic understanding of the broad types of decisions policy designers face and issues they consider when making particular design decisions.

The second section focuses on what research teaches about whether and how various “implementers” – teachers, schools, school districts, states, etc. — carry out policy designed by others. In particular, we will explore implementers’ discretion over implementation processes and outcomes in various contexts. We also will consider policy designers as a class of implementers and the extent to which explanations for policy implementation also account for policy design.

In the third section we grapple with the challenge of developing policy recommendations. What makes a policy recommendation “good”? What evidence is necessary to make certain recommendations logical or viable?

Readings draw from a number of areas including policy analysis, decision making, organizational change, and the sociology of work. This course uses primary policy documents, research reviews, theoretical writings, and empirical studies.

Honor Code

Throughout this course, you are expected to abide by the university’s code of academic integrity. The full text of the code is available on the web at www.inform.umd.edu/Campus Info/Departments/jpo/code acinteg.html.

Accommodations

If you have a documented disability or other learning needs and you would like accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements.

Please review the course syllabus at the start of the semester and advise me immediately about any intended absences for religious observances.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Note: A rubric that specifies standards for grading will be distributed separately.

REQUIREMENTS	DUE DATE	GRADING
<p>Brief professional bio In 1-2 pages, please tell me about yourself by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are 1-2 professional experiences you bring to this course? • What are your goals for this course? • <u>Doctoral students</u>, please briefly—in no more than 3-4 sentences—tell me about your dissertation topic/questions. • <u>Masters students</u> currently working on masters papers or theses—in no more than 3-4 sentences—tell me about your topic/questions. • What do you think might be a focus for your seminar paper? <p>Your bio will help me to take a quick inventory of the expertise each of you brings to this class and to understand some of your expectations for your work in this seminar. Please use the bio as an opportunity to think through how you might focus your work in this class to advance your own goals.</p> <p>*ADVICE: Be selective. Highlight a couple of significant points. *ADVICE: You may find the Radin reading useful to prompt your thinking about your goals related to policy studies.</p>	<p>Submit via e-mail to the instructor by 5pm September 16.</p>	<p>30% of overall grade</p>
<p>Class participation Participation depends on your attendance and your <i>careful</i> completion of assigned readings. Course lectures, discussions, cases, and other activities have been developed with the assumption that you have completed the assigned reading in advance of each class meeting <u>and that you have used the questions in the syllabus to guide your reading.</u></p> <p>* ADVICE: Form reading groups (2-3 students) to discuss course readings and questions prior to class meetings.</p>	<p>Each class meeting</p>	

Evidence critiques See information on page 5 and distributed at the second class meeting. The evidence critiques are due on the following dates:	DUE DATES	GRADING
Design Critique	October 12 by e-mail	25% of overall grade
Implementation Critique	November 16 by e-mail	
Seminar Paper See information on page 5 and distributed at the second class meeting. The Seminar Paper is due in the following installments on the dates indicated:		Each component graded Pass/ Incomplete and used to inform the final grade
Topic statement	September 28 by e-mail	
Draft design analysis	October 26 by NOON Hardcopy to Room 2202	
Draft implementation analysis Recommendations (optional)	November 30 by NOON Hardcopy to Room 2202	
FINAL PAPER	December 16 By NOON Hardcopy to Room 2202	45% of Final Grade

SEMINAR PAPER and EVIDENCE CRITIQUES

Seminar Paper

The Seminar Paper offers you an opportunity to explore a policy topic and design/implementation issues of particular interest to you. Each paper must:

- Focus on a particular policy or policy strategy (e.g., high-stakes testing in Montgomery County, Twenty-first Century Learning Communities Initiative, site-based management)
- Include a critical analysis of the policy design
- Include a critical analysis of implementation processes and outcomes
- Make recommendations for policy amendments and other actions appropriate to your paper's focus

Parts of this paper will be due in draft throughout the semester with the final version of the entire paper due during finals week. These drafts, graded pass/incomplete, are intended to provide you with formative feedback and additional resources.

Final papers should be between 10-12 pages long, single-spaced, and in 12-point font with 1-inch margins (or 20-24 pages long, double spaced and in 12-point font with 1-inch margins). Papers longer than this limit will be read up to the page limit. Papers significantly shorter than this limit typically are not adequate.

You are strongly encouraged to use the Seminar Paper to advance your work on your masters thesis, dissertation or professional challenges. For example, you may want to use the seminar paper to explore a policy issue that can evolve into a thesis or dissertation topic.

Masters students are encouraged to work in pairs. Doctoral students are encouraged to collaborate with others but to write their own paper.

With my permission, you may develop an alternative paper format if an alternative would be more helpful to your goals. For example, if you are developing a dissertation proposal you may want to conduct a critical literature review on a topic related to this seminar and your dissertation. If you are interested in an alternative paper format, please e-mail me as soon as possible but no later than **September 21** to make arrangements.

Further information about the seminar paper including the specific content of installments and the grading rubric will be distributed at the second class meeting.

Evidence Critiques

Good policy analysts are skilled collectors and analyzers of evidence about both policy design and implementation. The two evidence critiques offer extra opportunities for you to practice working with evidence and evidence sources. They require that you collect, analyze, and write a brief statement about the adequacy of primary source materials that you will use in your seminar paper. One critique relates to policy design and the other relates to implementation. These critiques require you to collect and examine your source materials early and to figure out what you do and do not know (and what you can and cannot know) about your policy's design and implementation before you begin writing your seminar paper installments. They also provide you with an opportunity to receive low risk feedback on your seminar paper and otherwise discuss your work with me along the way.

SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE

September 12: Introduction

What is policy? Who are policy designers? Who are policy implementers? Who are policy analysts and where does policy analysis “happen”? According to Radin, what are major differences between policy analysis in the early 1960s and policy analysis today? What are the implications for the training of policy analysts? For what you need to know and be able to do given your own goals related to policy studies?

Radin, B.A. (1997). Presidential address: The evolution of the policy analysis field: From conversation to conversations. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 16(2), 204-218. ONLINE.

I. POLICY DESIGN: Goals, targets, and tools

Policymakers face many decisions when designing policy. Three foundational decisions include which goals to aim for, for which targets, and by which tools. This section focuses on defining and understanding the relationship among goals, targets, and tools and expanding your ability to describe, analyze, and communicate salient dimensions of policy designs.

September 19: Goals and targets

Goals— A given policy may state that it wants to transform 15 large comprehensive high schools into 45 small autonomous schools-with in-schools. In a literal sense, the goal in this case is the transformation of 15 schools into 45. However, those numbers themselves do not fully capture the nature of the specific demands this policy places on teachers, school principals, students, and others. What are other ways of characterizing the types of changes this and other policies demand of specific people (targets) in their schools and communities? For example, is this a large-scale or a small-scale change? Would Elmore call this a fundamental/core change or a peripheral/surface change? How do you know—what information would you need to answer these questions? Why might it be important to distinguish these and other dimensions of the desired change in your policy analysis?

Targets— To deliver funding, school lunches, textbooks, penalties, and other resources and rules to implementers, policy designers must identify recipients. These recipients are sometimes called “target groups” (or target organizations). What are examples of target groups in education? According to Schneider and Ingram, what factors influence policy designers’ choices of targets? How do you identify targets in policy designs and how should you describe them in your analysis?

Course syllabus

Elmore, R.F. (1996). Getting to scale with good educational practice. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 1-26. READER

Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd Ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 3-8, 29-48. READER

Ingram, H., & Schneider, A. (1991). The choice of target populations. *Administration and Society*, 23(3), 333-356. READER

Case— Teacher policy/teaching for conceptual understanding

- (1) Discussion in Elmore about teacher practice
- (2) Materials on NCTM Standards to be distributed in class

September 26: Tools

This week’s readings discuss policy tools (also called instruments). As you read, please consider:

- What policy tools are identified in the readings? What are examples of these tools from your own experience?
- What is other language you know related to policy (e.g., legislation, grants, RFPs) and what, if anything, distinguishes a policy tool from these other terms?
- The authors wrote their pieces in the late 1980s. What other policy tools might they include if they were writing today?
- What do the authors mean by “behavioral assumptions of policy tools”? What are the behavioral assumptions of the policy tools discussed in the readings for this week?
- Why distinguish policies by their underlying tools? What does this analytic strategy help us understand about a given policy? What are the limitations?

Description of Seminar Paper and Evidence Critiques; Rubric

McDonnell, L.M., & Elmore, R.F. (1991). Getting the job done: Alternative policy instruments. In A. Odden (Ed.), *Education policy implementation* (pp. 157-184). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. ON LINE

Schneider, A. & Ingram, H. (1990). Behavioral assumptions of policy tools. *Journal of Politics*, 52, 510-529. ON LINE

Case—Small Schools Initiatives (aka Small Learning Communities and High School Reform)
Materials on Chicago’s small schools initiatives to be distributed.

October 3 & 10: The Case of Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 marked a significant expansion of federal policymaking in education. Overtime, Title I (then Chapter 1, then Title I again) has become a major source of federal education funding and a significant influence on the framing of policy problems and solutions in education. During the week of October 3rd we will not meet as a class. Rather, you will work in small groups to collect information on the policy design of Title I during the 1960s, 1990s, and 2000s. As you review this information, consider: What are the tools, targets, and change goals? What information would you include in a policy briefing on your assigned authorization of Title I?

In class on the 10th we will look across the reauthorizations and discuss:

- How have the tools, targets, and change goals of Title I changed over time?
- What do you think accounts for these changes?
- What lessons does the case of Title I teach about policy design?

We also will examine the sources of evidence about policy you have discovered and discuss:

- What are examples of sources that relate to policy design?
- How do we know which sources are “good sources” related to uncovering policy design?
- How do we know when we have enough information?

Murphy, J.T. (1991). Title I of ESEA: The politics of implementing federal education reform. In A. Odden (Ed.), *Education policy implementation* (pp. 13-37). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. READER

Handouts to be distributed

Primary sources on Title I during your assigned year.

Evidence checklist completed based on your Title I research

A brief (10-minute) presentation on the design of Title I during your assigned year collected by your group

October 17: Understanding why policy designers do what they do

Policy studies for decades have rested on assumptions that policy designers are driven by what Majone calls “decisionism” and what others call rational choice—and that these models of decision-making explain policy designers’ choices of goals, targets, and tools. More recent policy studies question such rational assumptions. Why do you think that is? According to Majone, what are alternatives to rational assumptions? Majone introduces the concept of “constraints” to help elaborate alternatives to rational choice. What are constraints on policy design? What are examples in contemporary educational policy arenas? Other readings from the first section of this first class also take up constraints on design decisions. Come to class prepared to discuss constraints reviewed by Radin, McDonnell & Elmore, Schneider & Ingram, and Murphy.

Given constraints, what are the implications for how policy analysts describe a policy design?

Majone, G. (1989). *Evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 12-20; 69-94. BOOK

Review discussions of constraints in Radin, McDonnell & Elmore, Schneider & Ingram, and Murphy

Case—Title I Continued

II. IMPLEMENTATION

This section provides an overview of lessons learned about policy implementation from the “discovery” of implementation in the 1960s to the present and explores contemporary explanations for implementation processes and outcomes.

October 24: Implementation— The alarmed discovery

The readings for this week review the history of policy implementation research and present several classic lessons about what happens during policy implementation. These lessons helped establish implementation as a field of study and policy analysis as a profession. What are those classic lessons? Why do you think early implementation literature arguably was dominated by the notion that variation in implementation (and other deviations from policy designers’ intentions) is problematic? How has education policy implementation research shifted its focus? Do educational leaders find variation any less problematic today? Why or why not? What are the implications of “complexity” for contemporary policy analysis?

Odden, A.R. (1991). The evolution of education policy implementation. In A. Odden (Ed.), *Education policy implementation* (pp. 1-12). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
READER

Honig, M.I. (Forthcoming). Complexity and policy implementation: Challenges and opportunities for the field. In M.I. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting Complexity*. Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press. ON LINE

October 31: Political Dimensions

Based on this week’s reading, what does it mean to say that politics mediates policy implementation? What are the dimensions of politics that affect implementation? What is an interest group? As an analyst, how do you know what the interests of various groups are? Drawing on implementation lessons discussed so far: How would you design a reconstitution policy to improve the quality of implementation? How would you define “high-quality” implementation and what would it take?

Bacharach, S.B., & Mundell, B.L. (1993). Organizational politics in schools: Micro, macro, and logics of action. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 29(4), 423-452.

Orr, M. (1998). The challenge of school reform in Baltimore: Race, jobs, and politics. In C.N. Stone (Ed.), *Changing urban education* (pp. 93-117). Lawrence, MS: University Press of Kansas. To be distributed.

Redmond Jones, D., & Malen, B. (1994). Sources of victory, seeds of defeat: Linking enactment politics and implementation developments. In W.K. Hoy & C.G. Miskel (Eds.), *Theory and research in educational administration, Volume 1*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing. READER

Case— High-Stakes Accountability and its Consequences: Contracting Out and School Reconstitution
Case information on EAI case in Orr and on School Reconstitution in Malen

November 7: Cognitive Dimensions

In their classic studies of street-level bureaucrats, Weatherley and Lipsky argue that complexity of implementers' professional demands and their ability to manage those demands are primary influences on implementation. According to Weatherley and Lipsky, on what strategies do street-level bureaucrats tend to draw to help them cope with that complexity? Spillane et al elaborate on cognitive constraints on individual decision-making that impact implementation. What are those constraints? Please read the Spillane 2002 article carefully and make sure you understand (1) what it means to say that cognitive factors impact implementation and (2) what specific effects cognitive factors have. Come to class with 2-3 clarifying questions about the Spillane reading for us to discuss as a group.

Weatherley, R., & Lipsky, M. (1977). Street-level bureaucrats and institutional innovation: Implementing special-education reform. *Harvard Education Review*, 47(2), 171-197. READER

Spillane, J.P., Reiser, B.J. & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, 72(3), 387-431. READER

Spillane, J. (2005). Standards deviation: How schools misunderstand education policy. CPRE Policy Brief RB-43. ON LINE

Cases— Special Education Policy and Standards-based Reform

November 14: Institutional Dimensions

This week's readings address institutional influences on implementation. What are these influences? What are their sources? How do Mark Smylie and associates use these concepts to explain the implementation of school-community partnerships in Chicago?

March, J.G. (1994). *A primer on decision making: How decisions happen*. New York, NY: The Free Press, pp. 57-102. READER.

Smylie, M.A., Crowson, R.L., Chou, V. & Levin, R.A. (1994). The principal and community-school connections in Chicago's radical reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 30(3), 342-364. READER

Case—School principals and school-community partnerships
Information in Smylie reading

November 21: Socio-cultural Dimensions

What are socio-cultural dimensions of implementation? According to socio-cultural theory, what are primary barriers to implementation? What enables implementation?

Some say Title I has been a sustained governmental response to address many of the issues that Anyon raises. Using a socio-cultural framework, how would you evaluate the effectiveness of Title I? To what extent can school restructuring policies overcome the deleterious influences on implementation of concern to socio-cultural analysts?

Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. *The American Political Science Review*, 87(2), 334-347. ON-LINE

Pollack, M. (2001). How the question we ask most about race in education is the very question we most suppress. *Educational Researcher*, 30(9), 2-12. ON-LINE

Case— School restructuring

Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto schooling: A political economy of urban educational reform*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 3-38. READER

III. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy analysis in many settings is conducted to direct action. Accordingly, most pieces of policy analysis include policy recommendations. In this section we will discuss the choices policy analysts face when developing recommendations. What do policy recommendations include? What makes a policy recommendation “good”?

November 28: Linking evidence and recommended action

According to Majone:

- What are the functions of policy recommendations in policy analysis?
- What challenges do analysts face when making recommendations?
- How *should* analysts go about developing recommendations?
- What pieces of evidence are appropriate in different contexts?

Do you agree or disagree with Majone’s argument about recommendations? Please come to class with three guiding principles you would use to develop policy recommendations for your seminar paper and please be prepared to discuss your rationale for these principles.

Majone, G. (1989). *Evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 21-68; 145-166. BOOK

Case—Your seminar paper topic

December 5: Policy Simulation

December 12: Wrap-Up