

EDPA 788P
Policy/Program Evaluation and Organizational Decisionmaking*
Winter/Spring Semester, 1996

Instructor: Betty Malen, 2205 Benjamin Building

Time and Place: Monday, 7:00-9:45; Room 2119 Benjamin Building

Office Hours: Call 301-405-3587; email lm125@umail.umd.edu

General Description: This course provides an overview of (a) various perspectives on the purposes, parameters, forms and uses (or misuses) of policy and program evaluations, (b) alternative "models" of evaluation, and (c) diverse methods of acquiring and interpreting information on policy/program effects. The course addresses a range of issues (e.g., conceptual, methodological, ethical, political, logistical) embedded in efforts to conduct thoughtful, "disciplined" evaluations. The course concentrates on recognizing what different approaches might reveal and conceal, inspecting the basis for judgements about the viability and "worth" of education policies/programs and identifying the implications of those judgements for organizational decisionmaking. It provides opportunities to conduct an evaluation and evaluate evaluations.

Major Objectives: This course seeks to help students:

a) develop a general understanding of the need for and limitations of policy evaluation (ie, "disciplined inquiry" regarding the aims, operations and effects of policies) as a means of informing individual judgements/collective decisions about education policy alternatives in various settings,

b) develop a general understanding of approaches to policy evaluation and ways of addressing the knotty issues embedded in efforts to systematically examine/assess education policy options,

c) identify, inspect and assess the types of arguments offered and the basis of claims made about policy alternatives,

d) construct/conduct "disciplined" policy evaluations,

e) develop a general understanding of the manner in which policy evaluations can be used (and abused) in organizational decisionmaking at any/all levels of the education system.

Course Contents and Approach: The course content is summarized on the attached outline and proposed schedule. The topics will be addressed through presentations, readings, discussions, written assignments, small group "work sessions" and individual or small group conferences. The course is "front loaded" on readings. Those demands are eased from mid-term on, to provide more time for students to conduct the policy evaluation and to wrestle with issues raised in readings and confronted when "doing" evaluations.

* Developed in consultation with Pat Galvin (U of Utah), Jerome Murphy (Harvard), and Stephanie Shea (U of Washington).

Course Requirements:

1. **Reading Assignments.** Each student is responsible for all assigned readings, "on reserve" in the curriculum lab and in the campus library. The readings include "classic" and "contemporary" writings on approaches to evaluation as well as sample evaluations. The aim is to provide a "menu" that may help students get a sense of the range of work that falls under the rubric of policy/program evaluation and develop an appreciation for the complexity of the enterprise. The readings may be adjusted or supplemented, as the instructor gets a clearer understanding of student backgrounds and interests. An annotated bibliography of recommended readings is attached. Information from these and other references will be highlighted in class lectures and used to illustrate ideas discussed in class sessions. These sources may be especially helpful as students work through their course paper.

2. **Class Participation.** Each student is expected to make contributions to the issues being addressed in class sessions through questions, critiques, illustrations, suggestions and other forms of feedback (e.g., alternative interpretations of ideas/issues, reactions to student approaches to their policy evaluations and critiques of their findings and interpretations).

3. **Policy Evaluation Paper.** Each student is expected to develop a written evaluation of a policy. This paper will be developed in installments that are submitted to the instructor for feedback throughout the semester. Where appropriate, installments may be reviewed by students and/or "stakeholders." In brief, the **five** installments will focus on a description of the policy/program to be examined, the design of the evaluation to be conducted, the report of major findings, the implications of the findings for organizational decisionmaking and an evaluation of the evaluation that was carried out. A synopsis of each installment is provided below. More detailed instructions for each installment will be provided in class sessions.

Installment 1 Description of Policy (6-8 pp). Due Feb 26

This installment identifies/describes the policy that will be the object of evaluation. Students are encouraged to select, in consultation with the instructor, a salient policy option, one they are curious about, can secure information about and can "evaluate" carefully, candidly and even-handedly.

This installment should include a description of the policy's stated aims, formal provisions and key components; a description of the organizational context in which the policy is being advocated or implemented; background information on current (or proposed) operations (e.g., participants, staff, resources, costs, reporting relationships); background information on the policy's evolution (e.g., how/when/why it was proposed/enacted/implemented; the impetus for it, the sentiments surrounding it); background information on key actors (e.g., individuals, organizations, agencies) that were/are actively involved in promoting or implementing (resisting or questioning) the policy and a general sketch of the information (e.g., documents, brochures, reports, "evaluations") presently available. (There is often, albeit not always, extant data that can be helpful in describing aspects of the policy's purposes, provisions and operations. Start nosing around---asking about the policy). This installment could also include your reasons for selecting this policy and your current impressions of/convictions about the policy. (If you have a viewpoint on the

policy it may be helpful to set it out, "upfront" for reasons we will address in class sessions).

The format and detail of this installment will vary. A sensible, generic strategy is to just begin with a statement about the purpose of this section of the paper, give an overview of how you will describe the policy (e.g., the categories/headings that you will use), indicate the basis for your description (e.g., documents, casual observations, snippets of oral history, direct involvement with the policy, related readings on the policy) and then develop the description the best you can, given the information you have. Since this installment may be "sketchy" do not hesitate to acknowledge what you know (and don't know), what observations are loosely grounded (e.g., what is speculation, conjecture, surmise) and what observations are more firmly rooted and more confidently offered.

For ideas about how to "tame the tiger," consult the sample policy evaluations on the class reading list and the annotated bibliography. The description of alternative approaches to programs for "at-risk" students in the article by Jennifer King (Rice) may be especially helpful. It identifies dimensions along which educational programs can be described, then uses them to organize the description of three prominent programs.

Installment 2 "Design" of the Evaluation (7-10 pp) Due Mar 25

This section articulates the approach you will use to evaluate the policy. It communicates the focus of the evaluation (aspects to be considered, questions to be addressed, criteria to be employed), the data sources/methods to be used to acquire/analyze evidence, the rationales for and the assumptions/limitations of the approach taken, the information secured.

Installment 3 Assessment of the Policy (15-20 pp) Due Apr 29 This section reports and interprets the findings of the policy evaluation. It "answers" the evaluation questions. It develops the lines of argument that support the judgements offered, acknowledges the strengths and weaknesses of those judgements (given data considered, methods used, perspectives employed) and discusses the implications of the analysis.

Installment 4 Policy Evaluation Due May 13

This installment puts all the pieces together in a cogent, credible written report. It includes an introduction to and overview of the entire paper, as well as revised, refined versions of all previous installments.

Installment 5 Addendum* (3-5 pp.) Due May 13

This paper is, in essence, an evaluation of the evaluation. It should highlight what (if anything) you think has been learned (about the policy, about the process of doing policy evaluations, about the "utility" of the exercise), what you would do differently, or what you would do additionally--to be more confident of your judgements or to subject your conclusions to stronger scrutiny. The paper could "revisit" constraints, problems, dilemmas or insights encountered in "designing" the evaluation, acquiring/interpreting data, and developing an evaluation that might inform/improve decisionmaking (your own and/or the

organizations). The paper should appraise the quality and the utility of the evaluation produced.

*Addendum Assignment adapted from Jerome Murphy's qualitative methods course syllabus.

Course Grades: The course grades will be based on assessments of class participation (20%) and written assignments (70% on installments 1-4 of the policy evaluation; 10% on installment 5, the addendum to the policy paper). Participation grades will be based on the ability to make informed and insightful contributions to the issues being addressed. The criteria relate to the quality (versus the number) of comments made. Paper grades will be based on the ability to articulate the logic that links the major purposes and central questions of the evaluation with the data acquired, the methods employed, the findings reported and the conclusions drawn; the ability to explicate the basis of judgements, develop cogent lines of argument, and keep the content and confidence of the claims commensurate with the nature of the data and the limits of the design. Rewrites are permitted; in some cases, rewrites may be required.

Invitations/Suggestions:

a) Conversations and conferences re: the written assignments or other matters can be initiated at any time throughout the semester, in class sessions or at other times.

b) In preparing for class, try to (i) "map" the readings, to make notes regarding the purpose, thesis, major lines of arguments and quality of evidence used to develop the ideas; (ii) "step back" and ask what the readings say about the session topics identified on the syllabus and then (iii) "step back" again and ask how the readings relate to the course aims (e.g., what they say about the nature of policy evaluation and its role in organizational decisionmaking). Following each class, students are encouraged to re-read or otherwise review the articles/chapters to clarify ideas, "clinch" insights, generate additional questions, etc. As the course calendar indicates, "mapping" readings is part of the "homework" for some sessions and "revisiting" readings is built-in to several sessions. If talking about the readings with others helps, consider forming an "in person" or "by phone or email" study group. These strategies may not "work" for everyone since people learn in different ways. Try them; see "what works" for you.

c) In developing the written assignments, consider the following process: keep a record of ideas/insights/issues; put the ideas in outline form (sentence outline if possible, but a phrase outline can also be helpful); talk through the ideas with another person; write a draft; interrogate your script; share a draft and invite candid reaction; weigh the feedback; rewrite.

Course Qualifiers: The course is an introduction to, not an in-depth treatment of a complex, contested terrain. The topics illustrate but they do not exhaust the full range of issues that could (arguably should) be examined. The topics included are complicated and controversial; they warrant more attention than can be given in a semester course. Research methods get very short shrift. Some readings are replete with gender-biased language, a trait that is recognized, but not endorsed.

Course Outline and Proposed Calendar

January 29 Introduction to Course

**Overview of Alternative Conceptions of Policy,
Policy Evaluation, and the Role of Policy Evaluation in Organizational
Decisionmaking
Clarification of "Boundary Definitions"
Overview of Options for Course Paper**

This session addresses the particulars of the course (e.g., its focus, emphasis, requirements), introduces a range of views regarding policy analysis/evaluation and its role in collective decisionmaking in governmental and organizational arenas, and offers boundary or "working" definitions of key terms and concepts. Since a course on policy evaluation "begs" many questions, this session invites students to consider such basic questions as: Why bother? If rational decisionmaking in organizations is more myth than reality, is it not foolhardy to try to systematically examine alternative courses of action, to formulate and explicate "data-based," well-reasoned, carefully measured judgements about the merit or worth of policy options? Since policy choices are value-laden decisions, is it necessary or appropriate to draw upon "research findings" to work through these normative matters? Is systematically acquired evidence on policy effects a stronger basis for making public policy decisions than casual appraisals, anecdotal testimonials, personal preferences, individual experiences or prominent sentiments? Since "research" is inevitably inconclusive, often contradictory, easily misconstrued and intermittently, if not frequently misused, is it prudent for educational leaders to conduct (or consume) policy evaluations?

February 5 The Role(s) of Policy Evaluation in Decisionmaking

**Alternative Conceptions of Appropriate Purposes,
Approaches, Uses, and Impacts of Evaluations
Implications for the Design/Conduct of Evaluations**

This session revisits questions posed in the first class. Since each reading provides a different, albeit not incompatible set of responses to these (and other) questions, the session will develop a matrix of diverse views, then derive implications for the design of policy evaluations (e.g., what is to be evaluated, by whom, how? with whom is the evaluation to be shared? how are evaluations to be "used"? what questions (or whose questions) will be addressed? why? how? is policy evaluation an ongoing process? a summative document? a mechanism for managing dilemmas and uncertainties? a mechanism for "solving" problems? "discovering" problems? "testing" hypotheses? fueling conflicts? clarifying issues? obscuring issues? In preparing for class, students should "map" each reading along dimensions, adapted from Pat Galvin's program evaluation syllabus:

Definition of policy/program evaluation employed/implied
Purpose of policy/program evaluation (e.g., describe current operations; "improve" existing programs; compare alternative approaches; critique aims as well as means)

Foci of evaluation (e.g., unit of analysis, key questions addressed, criteria for judgements)
 Audience for whom evaluation is prepared (e.g., organizational members, program participants, government officials, other stakeholders, broad publics)
 Roles assumed (e.g., by evaluator, sponsor, participants, constituents, broad publics)
 Methods employed (e.g., types of information sought, procedures to secure/analyze information; degree to which methods can be adjusted as evaluation proceeds)
 Resources required (e.g., time, money, expertise)
 Uses advocated/implied (e.g., how is "use" defined, gauged?)
 Values emphasized (or neglected)
 Assumptions made (e.g., about the nature of policy, the role of "research" as a basis for shaping/improving policy, the interplay of "facts" and "values" in social policy research; the relationship of "rational" analysis and political processes)
 Questions raised (e.g., what do you think about what is said?)

Readings: (Continued on next page)

Murphy, Jerome T. (1980). "Introduction," "The evaluation questions--Goal related results, program operations, program improvement)" and "Off and running" pp. 3-9; 13-31;35-53, author, Getting the Facts, Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishing.

Sebring, Penny A. & Bryck, Anthony S. (1993). "Charting reform in Chicago schools: Pluralistic policy research," New Directions for Program Evaluation, 13-28.

Rein, Martin (1976). "Policy analysis: A personal approach" (pp. 19-36); "The fact-value dilemma" (pp. 37-95), and "Values, social science and social policy,"(pp. 96-138). Chapters from book by author, Social Science and Public Policy. New York: Penguin.

Cronbach, Lee J. & Associates (1980). "Where evaluation stands today," (pp. 12-74) and "What is learned as evaluation proceeds," (pp. 152-212). Chapters one and three from book authored by Cronback & Associates, Toward Reform of Program Evaluation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. The intervening chapter two is included, is highly recommended but not required reading.

February 12 Framing Evaluations: Alternative Models, Common Issues, Critical Choices

This class takes a closer look at various "models" of evaluation and the common issues/critical choices that must be addressed as one selects (or combines) approaches to evaluation. Simply put, decisions about what to evaluate, when and how are not clean, clear-cut, neat and "neutral" choices.

Decisions about "models" and methods direct attention to some aspects of policy and neglect others. They have multiple consequences that affect the integrity, quality, and "utility" the evaluation. For these and other reasons, evaluators need to understand how models and methods shape the questions asked, the data sought and the interpretations offered. In preparation for this session, students should "map" the approaches to and "models" of evaluation addressed in the readings along the dimensions noted for the previous session.

Readings: (Continued on next page)

Shulman, Lee S. (1988). "Disciplines of inquiry in education: An overview," pp. 3-15, in Richard M. Jaeger (Ed) Complementary Methods for Research in Education. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Nevo, David (1986). "The conceptualization of educational evaluation: An analytical review of the literature," pp. 15-29, in Ernest R. House (Ed) New Directions in Educational Evaluation. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

Worthen, Blaine. R. & Sanders, James R. (1989). "A classification schema for evaluation approaches," pp. 60, 150-155, in authors, Educational Evaluation; Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines. New York: Longman.

Scriven, Michael (1983). "Evaluation ideologies," pp. 229-260, in G. Madous, et.al. Evaluation Models. Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff.

Scriven, Michael (1973). "Goal-free evaluation," pp. 319-328, in Ernest House (Ed) School Evaluation. Beverly Hills: McCutchan.

Murphy, Jerome T. (1980). Revisit "Evaluation questions" and "Off and running," pp. 13-31; 35-53.

Patton, Michael Q. (1986). "Focusing evaluation questions," pp. 61-82, in author, Utilization-focused Evaluation. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Malen, Betty (1988). "Review: Utilization-focused Evaluation," Journal of Education Finance, 13, 512-519.

February 19 No Class, Holiday**February 26 Recognizing and Appraising Alternative Approaches**

This session examines evaluations that incorporate (or combine) different "models" of evaluation. The aim is to "practice" identifying the approaches taken, inspecting the care with which they are applied and critiquing evaluations, in light of standards of "disciplined" inquiry and limitations of the designs. **Other readings may be used or substituted, depending on student interests.**

Readings: (Continued on next page)

Bull, Barry, "Confronting reform in teacher preparation," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 9, 25-40. (An effort to untangle/inspect major premises of a proposed policy that has strengths and limitations).

Bryck, Anthony S. et. al, (1993, July). A View From the Elementary Schools: The State of

Reform in Chicago. A report of the Steering Committee. Consortia on Chicago School Research, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 1-42. (An example of the "pluralist approach" to policy evaluation).

Malen, Betty. et. al. (1987). Career Ladder Reform, pp. 1-33.

(An effort to define criteria and apply them to different strategies aimed at improving the performance and retention of teachers but a problematic piece).

Malen, Betty (1993). "'Professionalizing' teaching by expanding teachers' roles," pp. 43-65, in Stephen L. Jacobson & Robert Berne (Eds) Reforming Education: The Emerging Systemic Approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc. (A more careful evaluation than the above, but still troubling).

Malen, Betty & Ogawa, Rodney. T. (1988). "Professional-patron influence on site-based governance councils: A confounding case study," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 10, 251-279. (An example of using a policy evaluation to challenge "theory").

King, Jennifer A. (1994). "Meeting the educational needs of at-risk students: A cost analysis of three models," Educational Evaluation and Policy analysis, 16, 1-19. (An example of a comparative cost analysis, a requisite to a cost-benefit or cost effectiveness assessment).

March 4 Understanding the Logic/Limits of "Models" and Methods: Coping with Multiple Sources of "Bias and Error"

This session concentrates on recognizing the numerous sources of bias and error inherent in research generally and policy evaluation particularly, understanding their consequences for the quality and integrity of an evaluation, and identifying ways one might address these matters. The session includes opportunities for students to detect "sources of bias and error" in their evaluation designs and to generate ideas for how those matters might be attended.

Readings:

Murphy, Jerome T. (1980). "Coping with bias and error," pp. 57-72, in author, Getting the Facts. Santa Monica: Goodyear.

Campbell, Donald T. (1972). "Reforms as experiments," in Amitai Etzioni & Carol H. Weiss, Evaluating Action Programs. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Concentrate on pp. 187-192;217-220.

House, Ernest R. (1990). "Methodology and justice," New Directions for Program Evaluation, 45, 23-36.

March, James (1972). "Model bias in social action," Review of Educational Research, 42, 4113-429.

Review Schulman and Rein readings from prior sessions.

Excerpts from Mayer, Robert & Greenwood, Ernest (1980), The Design of Social Policy Research, to be distributed.

March 11 Acquiring Accurate, Relevant Data: Multiple Options and General Guidelines

This session considers select data collection methods and foreshadows issues encountered in data analysis (a related, at times concurrent process).

Readings: (Continued on next page)

Murphy, J. T. (1980). "Intensive interviewing," and "Transient observation and document analysis," pp. 75-107; 111-128, author, Getting the Facts. Santa Monica: Goodyear.

Patton, Michael Q. (1990). "The content of interviews," pp. 290-330, in author, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. Second Edition. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Ogawa, Rodney T. & Malen, Betty (1990). "Towards rigor in reviews of multi-vocal literatures," and "Responses," Review of Educational Research, 61, 265-314.

March 18 No Class, Spring Break

March 25 Analyzing Data: Inspecting Inferences, Scrutinizing Arguments, Communicating Findings

This session focuses on assessing, aggregating and interpreting data, on the process of formulating/assessing inferences and developing sensible/defensible lines of argument that make explicit the basis for claims made. The session also addresses analytic "tools" that can be used to expose and inspect the arguments offered (judgements rendered) and emphasizes the need to (and ways to) keep the content and "confidence" of claims consistent with the logic of and the liabilities of the data considered, the methods employed and the perspectives selected.

Readings:

Murphy, J. T. (1980). "Analyzing and writing," pp. 131-158 and "Summing up and applying standards," pp. 161-180, author, Getting the Facts. Santa Monica: Goodyear.

Parker, Nancy & Timpane, John (1989). "Writing to persuade," pp. 122-133, in authors, Writing Worth Reading. Second Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Brockeriede, Wayne and Ehninger, Douglas (1960). "Toulmin on argument: An interpretation and application," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIV, (1), 44-53, but focus on 44-50.

Shea, Stephanie (1993). "Conceptual framework for analysis and justification," (pp. 1-7). Unpublished paper.

Review sample evaluations from prior sessions.

April 1 Getting It Together: Checking Designs

This class may recap topics as needed, but will be devoted largely to individual and/or group work on students' policy evaluations. The intent of this session is to provide candid, collegial review of in progress work. The focus will be on checking and strengthening the proposed evaluation designs.

Readings: Review readings on alternative designs.

April 8 No Class, AERA Conference

April 15 Getting It Together: Airing Issues, Weighing Evidence, Scrutinizing Arguments

This session will be dedicated to small and large group critiques of students' "in progress" policy evaluations and/or other sample evaluations. The intent is to practice spotting holes in data, leaps in logic and tendencies to overstate claims.

Readings: Examples of policy evaluations and/or other materials may be required.

April 22 Presenting "in progress" Work: Securing Collegial Reviews

Students will have distributed a draft of their in progress evaluation paper to at least one of their classmates so that the draft can be carefully read prior to the start of this class session. Students will present their work and receive feedback from their designated critic and from other class members.

April 29 Evaluating Policy Evaluation: Revisiting the Role(s) of Policy Evaluation in Organizational Decisionmaking

This session reconsiders the multiple purposes/uses of policy evaluation, the ethical, "technical" and political complexities embedded in policy evaluation, the "educative" dimension of policy evaluation and the ways in which (or conditions under which) policy evaluation might inform/improve organizational decisionmaking.

Readings: Review the Cronbach readings, the House article on methodology and justice, and the Murphy chapter on standards.

Select writings on "knowledge utilization," to be announced.

May 6 Improving Policy Evaluation: Developing Rigorous and Relevant, Thoughtful and Useful Evaluations

This session builds on the prior session by putting the focus on how we might use our

understanding of policy evaluation to create and conduct careful analyses of policy options/program ventures that hold promise of informing and influencing organizational decisionmaking in governmental settings and in educational arenas.

Readings: To be announced.

May 13 Appraising the Course - Highlighting Options for Further Study

This session "steps back" to assess the course, identify options for further study and arrange conferences, as needed, to complete required re-writes. If students wish, this session can be held at my home in Annapolis. If any student would be inconvenienced by a "site switch," we will meet on campus, in our "regular" room.

Annotated Bibliography Supplementary Readings

This bibliography contains references that convey and critique diverse views on the purposes, parameters, forms and functions of policy evaluation. It includes sources that debate the impact of (often termed the utility of) policy evaluations at various levels of the system and at various stages of the policymaking process. It includes examples of different kinds of policy evaluations (e.g., large scale and small scale; multiple option and single program foci; quantitative and qualitative approaches). Taken together, these readings address many of the ethical, conceptual, methodological and logistical issues inherent in efforts to "evaluate" education policies. They illustrate the complex, "contested" character of policy evaluation and the numerous forces that combine and interact to shape the manner in which policy evaluation influences organizational decisionmaking.

Perspectives on Policy (Program) Analysis/Evaluation

Chelimsky, Eleanor (1986). "What have we learned about the politics of program evaluation?" Plenary address to the American Evaluation Association in Kansas City, Missouri, October 30, 1986.

This paper provides an overview of issues regarding the role, utility and focus of policy evaluations and a modification if not a refutation of some of the positions taken by Cronbach, at least as they apply to agency-sponsored evaluations commissioned by legislative bodies and as they relate to "go/no-go" decisions in Congressional committees.

Chelimsky, E. (1987). "The politics of program evaluation," in D. S. Cordray, H. S. Bloom, & R. J. Light (Eds) *Evaluation Practice in Review*. New Directions for Program Evaluation. no.34. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. (the published version of the above paper).

Lindblom, Charles E. & Cohen, David K. (1979). *Usable Knowledge*. New Haven: Yale University Press. This monograph addresses how social science research may (or may not) be an instrument of social problem-solving; how knowledge of various sorts (research information, professional knowledge, "ordinary knowledge") shape policy making; how these various forms of

knowledge are all subject to errors, and how we might reconceptualize our approach to knowledge generation/utilization.

Mayer, Robert R. & Greenwood, Ernest (1980). The Design of Social Policy Research. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. This book is an excellent introduction to policy research in part because it defines and characterizes policy research in comprehensible ways; it illustrates the many forms that policy research may take but also indicates the common issues that are present in any policy research design; it provides a definition of a much used term, "conceptual framework," and discusses how the conceptual framework operates as a causal orientation, a parameter setting device, an interpretive schema and a bridging device--to connect findings of studies to related bodies of literature. The book also discusses how one checks to be sure that the design "fits" the phenomena of study and that the methods are appropriate to the questions.

Rein, Martin. (1976). Social Science and Public Policy. New York: Penguin Books. This book addresses critical dimensions of and dilemmas in policy research (e.g., the interplay between personal values and policy analysis, facts and values, reason and purpose). It reviews a number of approaches to policy analysis and argues for the need to be explicit re: the domain of inquiry (matters of purpose, theories of intervention, "effects" of particular programs), diligent in connecting/qualifying evidence, skeptical of definitive claims, cognizant of the limitations of the perspective employed, clear about the kinds of evidence required to make different types of claims and the distortion that occurs when those distinctions are not upheld. The book is an excellent complement to/elaboration of ideas in Shea essay.

Rein, Martin & White, S. H. (1977). "Policy research: Belief and doubt," Policy Analysis, 3, (4), 239-272. This article addresses the uses and abuses of policy research, reviews proposals for the "reform" of policy research, then argues for a broader conception of policy research, one that includes, but is not confined to the notion of policy research as informing the management of dilemmas, illuminating the consequences of trade-offs, and enhancing the capacity to operate (individually and collectively) as responsible social critics.

Stone, Deborah A. (1988). Policy paradox and political reason. Glenview, IL: Scott Forsman. Among the many ideas advanced in this book, the notion of policy analysis as political reasoning is an over-arching theme. The book argues that the act of defining problems and alternatives (let alone making choices among options) is essentially a political process; that the prominent models for making "rational" choices (cost-benefit analysis, risk-benefit analysis, decision "trees") are a form of politics, not an antidote to politics; that the premier political contest is over ideas, ways of thinking about complex circumstances and conflicting interpretations of ideal states, actual conditions and real events.

Weiss, Carol (1970). "The politicization of evaluation research," Journal of Social Issues, 26, (4), 57-68. This article identifies some of the issues associated with designing and evaluating policy, given the fundamentally political nature and harried character of governmental decisionmaking processes.

Wildavsky, Aaron. (1987). Speaking Truth to Power: The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.

This book focuses on the complexities and dilemmas embedded in policy analysis and emphasizes the need to treat policies as hypothesis to be tested, as errors to be discovered. It argues for the need to view reasoned analysis as one ingredient of sensible/defensible judgements regarding alternative conceptions of problems and alternative courses of action.

Perspectives on "Utilization" of Policy Analyses/Evaluations

Cousins, J. Bradley & Leithwood, Kenneth A. (1986). "Current empirical research on evaluation utilization," Review of Educational Research, 56, (3), 331-364. This article discusses the various dimensions along which "utilization" of policy/programs might be gauged and identifies the features of the evaluation and the features of the context that appear to affect whether and how policy/program evaluations might impact organizational decisionmaking.

Leviton, Laura C. & Boruch, Robert F. (1983). "Contributions of evaluation to education programs and policy," Evaluation Review, 7, (5), 563-598. This article reports the results of a study of the "impact" of policy evaluations on policy decisionmaking in federal arenas and suggests that policy evaluation may have more impact on decisions that is commonly acknowledged.

Malen, Betty, Murphy, Michael J. & Geary, Sue (1988). "The role of evaluation information in legislative decision making: A case study of a loose cannon on deck." Theory into Practice, XXVII, (2), 111-125. This article reports findings regarding the impact of a policy evaluation on career ladder reform in Utah on legislative decisionmaking. The article argues that policy evaluation can affect decision dynamics, in part because it poses a threat to fragile, instrumental "precarious" political coalitions. The article suggests that one of the reasons policy evaluation information may be seen as threatening is because the specification required for systematic evaluation collides with the ambiguity required for political negotiation and coalition formation.

Rist, Ray C. (1981). "On the utility of ethnographic research for the policy process," Urban Education, 15, (4), 485-494. This article does an excellent job of indicating the contributions that qualitative research, particularly longitudinal studies, can provide. The article argues that these types of studies can clarify the definition of problems, identify levers of change and uncover unanticipated consequences. In these and other ways, ethnography is viewed as a "useful" approach to/form of policy evaluation.

Shavelson, Richard J. (1988). "Contributions of educational research to policy and practice: Constructing, challenging, changing cognition," Educational Researcher, 17, (7), 4-11,22. Responding to concerns that research has not operated to improve schools, this article argues that educational research makes significant contributions to policy and practice largely by altering the definitions of or views of problems and solutions, by affecting how educators think about the circumstances they confront. The article further argues that greater contributions might be made if researchers had a better understanding of the action mind frames of policymakers and practitioners.

Weiss, Carol H. (1977). "Research for policy's sake: The enlightenment function of social science research," Policy Analysis, 3, (4), 531-546. The article argues that policy evaluation has long-term versus immediate effects and that the primary impact is altering conceptions of policy problems.

Weiss, Carol H. & Bucuvalas (1980). "Truth tests and utility tests: Decision-makers' frames of reference for social science research," American Sociological Review, 45, (2), 302-313. This article suggests that research needs to pass a truth test, meaning it must be a defensible, credible piece of work that will withstand scrutiny. If that test is passed, its utility (ability to enter the deliberations and impact the decisions) is conditioned by a number of factors including its conformity to the user's expectations/predispositions and its challenge to the status quo.

Weiss, Janet A. & Gruber, Judith E. (1984). "Using knowledge for control in fragmented policy arenas," Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 3, (2), 225-247. This article argues that knowledge acquired through policy evaluations contributes to public policy in many ways--it informs policy choices, serves as a source of ideas, "reframes" views of problems. One of its most important effects is to enhance control (not used here as a pejorative term equivalent to coercion, but as a descriptive term related to influence through persuasion, manipulation of costs [imposition of constraints/sanctions], manipulation of benefits [use of inducements/incentives] and affirmation of authority (or the encouragement of deference to authority).

Wirt, Frederick M. & Mitchell, Douglas E. (1982, Fall). "Social science and educational reform: The political uses of social research," Educational Administration Quarterly, 1-16. The article argues that the ability of research to influence policy decisions is contingent on many factors, including the extent to which findings are compatible with preformed judgements or powerful enough to change established sentiments, the stage of the policymaking process (e.g., agenda setting, alternative formulation, enactment, oversight), the motives of policymakers and the availability of information that is viewed as relevant at the time it is most needed.

Examples of Policy Evaluations

Clusters of policies that address different aspects of a general "problem" (e.g., poverty, employment, school performance) or address multiple approaches to services for a target population (e.g., "gifted" or "at risk" or "aged").

Boyd, William L. (1990). What Makes Ghetto Schools Work or Not Work? National Center for School Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This monograph tries to examine how various policies may (or may not) operate to foster school improvement in urban areas.

DeLacy, J. (1990, December). The Bellevue Evaluation Study: Studying the Effects of School Renewal. Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, University of Washington and the Bellevue School District, Bellevue, WA. This monograph reports the findings regarding the

manner in which a bundle of reform initiatives seem to be playing out in schools in the district. It is a good example of a district's effort to launch a longitudinal study of multiple reform initiatives.

DeLacy, J. (1992, August). The Bellevue Evaluation Study (Second Report). Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, University of Washington and the Bellevue School District, Bellevue, WA. See notes above.

Glaser, Nathan. (1988). "Education, training and poverty: What worked," in Nathan Glaser, The Limits of Social Policy, pp. 58-85. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. This chapter examines evaluations of various programs, addresses reasons for their conflicting results and synthesizes findings/implications. It illustrates how the approach to evaluation can skew results and underscores the need for caution in interpretation of results. It's an excellent example of how to "lay out" the parameters of arguments about policy effects.

Genres of policies that encompass common or comparable stated aims, central features, major premises or "theories of action" (i.e., how an approach/action is expected to ameliorate a problem/condition)

Berman, Paul & McLaughlin, Milbrey (1978). Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, VIII. Santa Monica: Rand. A classic, large scale study of the implementation/impact of federal initiatives. Among its many contributions, the study illustrate the many forces that combine to make the policy implemented quite different from the policy enacted. That is not to say that local translations of federal policies are necessarily undesirable, only that they are highly likely.

Center for Policy Research in Education. A series of papers on various versions of "choice" including Doug A. Archbald, "The Minnesota Postsecondary Options Law," Richard F. Elmore, "Community School District 4, New York City;" and Richard F. Elmore, "Working Models of Choice in Education."

Knapp, Michael S. et. al. (1991). "Cumulative effects of federal educational policies on schools and school districts," in Allen Odden (Ed) Educational Policy Implementation, pp. 105-123. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. Unlike studies that tend to focus on initial impacts of "single" policies, this article looks at aggregate effects of multiple policies. From this perspective, the "impact" of policy appears to be considerably greater than typically reported.

Knapp, Michael S., Shields, Patrick M. & Turnbull, Brenda J. (forthcoming). Academic Challenge for the Children of Poverty. An evaluation sponsored by the US Department of Education. This piece examines academic instruction in the domains of reading, math and writing, assesses instructional strategies and begins to dispel "myths" about instruction (e.g., that students have to have mastered basic skills before they are given opportunities for more intellectually challenging work, etc). This report is a good illustration of the way in which policy evaluation

might work to "reframe" policy problems.

Levin, Henry M. (1989). The Theory of Choice Applied to Education. Stanford, CA: Center for Educational Research at Stanford. This monograph examines various choice proposals in terms of their impact on dimensions of efficiency, equity, quality and liberty. An excellent example of how one might define aspects of major social values (equity, efficiency, quality and liberty), then examine how policies affect aspects of these values.

Shephard, Lorrie A. (1991). "Readiness testing in local school districts: An analysis of backdoor policies," in Susan Fuhrman & Betty Malen (Eds) The Politics of Curriculum and Testing, pp. 159-179. New York: Falmer. This is an excellent example of how policy evaluation can uncover unanticipated or "unconsidered" consequences--how policy enacted for one purpose gets used for another and produces effects that are highly problematic but often unnoticed by those who have diverted the original policy

Cibulka, James G. (1991). "Educational accountability reforms: Performance information and political power," in Susan Fuhrman & Betty Malen (Eds) The Politics of Curriculum and Testing, pp. 181-201. New York: Falmer. This chapter compares three approaches to accountability (state regulated bureaucratic approach, a local information/reporting approach and a market-parent choice approach). It unravels the "theories of action" embedded in each approach and examines how the alternatives operate (or fail to operate) to strengthen accountability in school systems.

"Singular" policy/program that is proposed or that exists in particular organizational contexts (as opposed to the entire "web of policies" that exist in or impinge on organizations)

Bull, Barry L. (1987). "Confronting reform in teacher preparation: One state's experience," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 9, 25-40. This article examines prominent justifications for reforming teacher education in Washington state and indicates that those justifications are not well-founded and that unintended side effects are probable. The article illustrates how one might "test" the assumptions on which policy proposals are based in terms of the accuracy of those assumptions and the extent to which they "hold" in a particular state setting. It also illustrates how policy evaluation may expose side-effects.

Cohen, David K. & Farrar, Eleanor (1977, Summer). "Power to the parents? The story of education vouchers," Public Interest, 72-97. This article reports/interprets the infamous "Alum Rock" experiment with parental choice. It illustrates how policies may go astray in part because the "confuse symptoms with cause" and hence apply weak remedies to difficult situations. The article also illustrates how evaluations of "experiments" may carry little weight in education reform debates.

Cronbach, Lee. J. (1993). "Course improvement through evaluation," pp. 101-115, in G.

Madous, M. Scriven, D. Stufflebeam (Eds) Evaluation Methods. Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff. While not an evaluation report per se, the article contains interesting and important ideas for how one might evaluate particular courses and insightful critiques of the limitations of fairly prominent approaches to course evaluations. It's a useful example of how one might apply notions of evaluation to select components (a course) of a broader policy.

Hargreaves, Andres. (1991). "Contrived collegiality: The micropolitics of teacher collaboration," in Joseph Blase (Ed), The Politics of Life in Schools: Power, Conflict, and Cooperation, pp. 46-72. Newbury Park: Sage. This chapter provides an interesting counter-point to arguments regarding policies to "empower" teachers. It suggests these policies may operate as vehicles of managerial control rather than mechanisms for teacher empowerment.

Kirp, David L. (1992). "What school choice really means," The Atlantic, 270, (5), 119-132. This article is an interesting illustration of a "reinterpretation" of others' policy evaluations. It suggests that the "benefits" attributed to parental choice policies in New York, particularly the well-publicized settings in "District 4" may be more the result of schools selecting students than parents choosing schools. It also suggests that while some gains may have been made, large numbers of students are no better off, and may even be in more adverse educational environments.

Mann, Dale (1974). "Political representation and urban school advisory councils," Teachers College Record, 75, (3), 279-307. This article is an excellent example of taking a concept (political representation), defining criteria for gauging it, then assessing the extent to which a policy promotes the aim. The article is a strong example of careful analysis, insightful treatment of rival interpretations and compelling but cautious interpretations.

Oakes, Jeannie (1985). Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. The book is an excellent example of how to "lay out" the framework for/methods of analysis and an excellent example of the use of multiple methods to examine tracking policies. It is a fine illustration of my interpretation of Rein's concept of policy analyst as responsible social critic.

Senese, Guy (1986). "Self-determination and American Indian Education: An illusion of control," Educational Theory, 36, (2), 153-164. The article examines the impact of a federal statute, in terms of its stated aims. It argues the policy is more a rhetorical device than a successful program, at least when judged in terms of its expressed intent.

Weatherly, Richard & Lipsky, Michael (1977). "Street-level bureaucrats and institutional innovation: Implementing special education reform," Harvard Education Review, 47, 171-197. This article reports the initial effects of public special education legislation in Massachusetts and illustrates the webs of forces that intercede to shape effects and to produce patterns of responses that are inconsistent with the expressed intent of the policy.

Other Provocative Works:

Schorr, L. Within our reach.

Henig, Jeffrey. Rethinking school choice.

Carnoy, Martin. New book on race, poverty, education and policy.

Lewis, Dan, et. al. Race and educational reform.

Finkelstein, Barbara. An in-progress edited volume on evaluating multi-cultural programs.

Writings on how various policies (e.g., affirmative action, faculty selection, curricular adjustments) "play out" in higher education institutions, to be highlighted as student interests are identified and as colleagues' recommendations are forwarded to me.