

**MANAGING PRODUCTIVE SCHOOLS
EDPA 766**

Spring 2001

**Jennifer Rice
Benjamin Building, Room 2110
Office: (310) 405-5580**

**Class Meeting Times: Wednesday, 4:30 - 7:15 pm
Office Hours: Monday 1:00-3:00, and by appointment**

Course Description

As the public increasingly demands greater accountability for educational resources, issues of productivity have risen to the forefront of education policy making. Educational productivity is fundamentally concerned with how educational systems transform inputs into desired outcomes. This seemingly straightforward concept is riddled with complexities that have undermined a comprehensive understanding of the educational production process. On one hand, much debate has surrounded the process of identifying what counts as desired educational outcomes: academic achievement? civic responsibility? cultural awareness? critical thinking skills? On the other hand, the spectrum of educational resources or inputs is wide and varied across communities. While fiscal resources are an obvious input, perhaps what is done with those fiscal resources is even more important. For instance, educational entities purchase teachers, administrators, facilities, materials and equipment. Further, communities contribute varied resources in the form of parental involvement, community college input, mentors from local business and industries. All of these different types of resources form a configuration of inputs that produce educational outputs of one form or another.

This course is designed to introduce students interested in education policy and/or school administration to issues surrounding educational productivity. Of central interest in the course is identifying what it is we know and what it is we don't know about how schools work, with the ultimate goal of exploring ways to make schools operate more effectively and efficiently to realize desired outcomes for all students. Emphasis in the course is placed on education policy issues at the primary and secondary levels of the schooling system in the United States, but many of the principles discussed can be applied to other levels of the schooling system and other industrialized nations.

The course begins with a discussion of central terms and concepts to be used in the course. After a section on educational indicators, attention will turn to two complementary ways to assess productivity. The next section unpacks the debate over the productivity of public education. The remainder of the course explores what we know from productivity research and implications for educational decision making.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to complete weekly reading assignments and are encouraged to actively participate in class discussions. One form of class participation may involve student-led discussions each week. Students' final grades will be based on the following five course requirements. Hand-outs outlining the details and expectations for each of the assignments will be distributed later as they arise in the course.

1. ***Analysis of indicator report*** (20% of grade): Each student will analyze basic characteristics of an indicator report of their choosing. This assignment will be due during week 3 of the course (3-5 double-spaced pages in length).

2. **Position paper on productivity debate** (20% of grade): Weeks 7 and 8 of the course will focus on the contentious debate over the degree to which education functions as a productive enterprise. During these sessions the course, the class will prepare for and participate in an informed and structured debate over this topic. In addition, each student will be responsible for individually writing a position paper on this debate that addresses central arguments expressed by both sides. This paper will be due during week 8 of the course (3-5 double-spaced pages in length).
3. **Group design of an education production function study** (20% of grade): Students will work in small groups to design a production function study. The study designs should be driven by a relevant policy interest as supported by a review of the literature. Study variables will be drawn from a secondary data set made available to students in the course. Weeks 9 and 10 of the course will be set aside for group work and presentations of these study designs.
4. **Brief on an educational input** (20% of grade): Each student will be required to research, write a brief report about, and present findings on what is known regarding a particular input in the schooling process. Students may work in small groups (2-3 people) on researching the inputs and presenting findings, but must write and submit individual papers. The briefs should describe the input of interest, array the empirical evidence that exists on the productivity of that input, and draw broad policy conclusions regarding investments in the input. Presentations of these reports will occur during weeks 11-13, and all written briefs will be due during week 13 of the course (5-7 double-spaced pages in length).
5. **Final essay** (20% of grade): As a capstone to the course, each student will be asked to write a short essay (5-7 pages) on the role of productivity research in education policy. A set of guiding questions will be provided as this assignment approaches. Alternatively, students may use this assignment to explore a specific topic that they find to be of interest. Students who wish to exercise the latter option must submit their topic by week 11 of the course and get permission from the instructor. All final essays will be due during week 14 of the course.

Required Reading

This course will rely on extensive readings about educational productivity and related issues. A set of readings is provided for each week of the course. Some of these (citations provided below) are from texts available at the University Bookstore. A number of additional readings are included in the weekly reading list. These are available in a packet for purchase from Bel Jean printing.

Allington, Richard L. and Cunningham, Patricia M. (1996). *Schools that work: Where all children read and write*. New York: Harper Collins.

Hanushek et al. (1994). *Making schools work: Improving performance and controlling cost*. Washington D.C.: Brookings.

Ladd, Helen F. (1996). *Holding schools accountable: Performance-based reform in education*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Others to be acquired:

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1998). *Developments in school finance, 1997*, Ed. by William Fowler, Jr. Washington, D.C., NCES 98-212.

Grissmer, David W. (1998). *Education productivity*.

Economic Policy Institute. (2001). The class size policy debate.

Managing Productive Schools Course Outline

- I. Developing a Common Vocabulary (Week 1)
 - A. What is the meaning of "accountability", "managing", "productivity", "efficiency", "indicator"?
 - B. How do these concepts apply to education?

- II. How Do We Know Whether Schools are Productive? Educational Indicators (W2)

- III. How Do We Assess Productivity?
 - A. Cost analysis (W3-4)
 - B. Production functions (W5)

- IV. Is Education a Productive Enterprise?
 - A. The debate in the literature (W6)
 - B. How to interpret inputs -- Has spending increased? (W7)
 - C. How to interpret outcomes -- Have outcomes improved? (W8)

 - D. Designing a production function study (W9-10)

- V. What Can/Should We Do? Lessons from Productivity Research
 - A. What do we know about individual inputs? (W11)
 - class size
 - teacher quality

 - B. What do we know about "models" of reform? (W12)

 - C. What do we know about systemic responses? (W13)
 - incentives
 - school based management
 - charter schools

- VI. What are the Implications for Decision Making? Using Data to Improve Productivity (W14)
 - A. Role of state versus local actors
 - B. Data issues
 - C. Data simulation

Managing Productive Schools (EDPA 766/788R)
Preliminary Weekly Course Schedule and Reading List

Week 1: Defining the Issues and Developing a Common Vocabulary (1-31-01)

Hanushek, Chapter 1

Ladd, Introduction

Allington & Cunningham, Chapter 1

[*Discuss inputs*]

Week 2: Educational Indicators (2-7-01)

DUE: BRING IN ARTICLE THAT REPORTS ON OR USES EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS
SELECT TOPICS FOR INPUT BRIEFS

Blank, Rolf K. (1993). Developing a system of education indicators: Selecting, implementing, and reporting indicators. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 15(1), 65-80.

Sommerfeld, Meg (ed). (1997). A national response to Quality Counts. *The Harvard Education Letter*, 13(2).

MSPAP documents

Quality Counts

Condition of Education

National Goals Panel Report

Youth Indicators

Education and the Economy

Week 3: How Do We Assess Productivity? Cost Analysis (2-14-01)

DUE: ANALYSIS OF INDICATORS REPORT

Jamison, Dean T., Klees, Steven J. & Wells, Stuart J. (1978). The costs of educational media: Guidelines for planning and evaluation. Beverly Hills: Sage, p. 25-62.

Monk, D.H. & King, J.K. (1993). Cost analysis as a tool for education reform. In S.L. Jacobson and R. Berne (eds.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Rice, J.K (1997). Cost analysis in education: Paradox and possibility. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 19 (4), 309-317.

Week 4: How Do We Assess Productivity? A Look at Cost Analyses (2-21-01)

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), 1-19.

Barnett, W.S. Economics of school reform: Three promising models. In Ladd, Chapter 9.

Rice, J.K. & Brent, B.O. (2000). An alternative avenue to teacher certification: A cost analysis of the Pathways to Teaching Careers Program. Submitted to the *Journal of Education Finance* for review.

Levin, H.M. & Woo, L. (1981). An evaluation of the costs of computer-assisted instruction. *Economics of Education Review*, 1(1), 1-25.

Others

Week 5: How Do We Assess Productivity? Production Function Research (2-28-01)

Ferguson, R.F. & Ladd, H.F. (1996). How and why money matters: An analysis of Alabama schools. In Ladd, chapter 8.

Grissmer, David W. (1998). *Education productivity*, p. 1-12

Wenglinsky, Harold. (1998). School district expenditures, school resources, and student achievement: Modeling the production function. In W.J. Fowler (ed.) *Developments in School Finance, 1997*, Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education.

Monk, D.H. & Rice, J.K (1999). Modern education productivity research: Emerging implications. In W.J. Fowler (ed.), 1997-99 Selected Papers in School Finance. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, p.115-139. (Part 1)

Week 6: Is Public Education a Productive Enterprise? The Debate in the Literature (3-7-01)

Grissmer, *Education productivity*, p. 12- 37

Hanushek, Chapters 2-4

Hedges, Larry V., Laine, Richard D., & Greenwald, Rob. (1994). Does money matter? A meta-analysis of studies of the effects of differential school inputs on student outcomes. *Educational Researcher*, 23(3), 5-14.

Hanushek, Eric A. (1994). Money might matter somewhere: A response to Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald. *Educational Researcher*, 23(4), 5-8.

Hedges, Larry V., Laine, Richard D., & Greenwald, Rob. (1994). Money does matter somewhere: A reply to Hanushek. *Educational Researcher*, 23(4), 9-10.

Economic Policy Institute. (2001). The class size policy debate.

Week 7: Is Public Education a Productive Enterprise? How to Interpret Inputs (3-14-01)

Peternick, Lauri, Smerdon, Becky A., Fowler, William, & Monk, David H. (1998), Using cost and need adjustments to improve the measurement of school finance equity. In W.J. Fowler (ed.) *Developments in School Finance, 1997*, Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education.

Rothstein, Richard & Mishel, Lawrence. (1997). Alternative options for deflating education expenditures over time. In W.J. Fowler (ed.) *Developments in School Finance, 1996*, Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education.

[Prep for productivity debate]

SPRING BREAK – 3-21-01

Week 8: Is Public Education a Productive Enterprise? How to Interpret Outcomes (3-28-01)

DUE: POSITION PAPERS ON PRODUCTIVITY DEBATE

Grissmer, David, Flanagan, Ann, & Williamson, Stephanie (1998), Does money matter for minority and disadvantaged students? In W.J. Fowler (ed.) *Developments in school finance, 1997*, Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education.

Bracey, Gerald W. (1995). The fifth Bracey report on the condition of public education. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(2), 149-160.

[Productivity debate]

Weeks 9-10: Computer Lab for Design of Production Function Studies (4-4-01, 4-11-01)

Week 11: Lessons from Productivity Research: Individual Inputs (4-25-01)

Hanushek, Chapter 5

Allington & Cunningham, Chapters 4-9 (divide among class)

Economic Policy Institute, The class size policy debate

Monk, D.H. & Rice, J.K (1999). Modern education productivity research: Emerging implications. In W.J. Fowler (ed.), 1997-99 Selected Papers in School Finance. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, p.115-139. (Part 2)

[*Student input presentations*]

Week 12: Lessons from Productivity Research: Models of Reform and Incentive Programs (4-18-01)

Allington & Cunningham, Chapter 2

Ladd, Part One

[*Student input presentations*]

Week 13: Lessons from Productivity Research: Systemic Responses (5-2-01)

DUE: INPUT BRIEFS

Hanushek, Chapters 6-7

Ladd, Part Two

[*Student input presentations*]

Week 14: Implications for Decision Making: Levels of Decision Making and Data Issues (5-9-01)

Hanushek, Chapter 8

Isaacs, Julia B., Garet, Michael S., & Stephen Broughman. (1998). A proposal for collecting school-level resource data on the schools and staffing survey. In W.J. Fowler (ed.) *developments in school Finance, 1997*, Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education.

Relevant Journals

American Economic Review
Economics of Education Review
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Policy
Harvard Education Review
Harvard Journal on Legislation
Journal of Economic Literature
Journal of Education and Economics
Journal of Education Finance
Journal of Human Resources
Journal of the Association of Public Policy and Management
Journal of Management Science Policy Analysis
Journal of Political Economy
Review of Economics and Statistics