

Education Policy U ED 70500
CUNY Graduate Center
Doctoral Program in Urban Education
Fall 2008 -- Tuesdays, 4:15-6:15, Room 3207
Professor Jean Anyon

Goals of the course are: 1) To assist students in assessing urban educational policy in its political, economic, and cultural contexts; 2) To develop skills of critical analysis of policies and policy texts; and 3) To introduce students to the writing of policy briefs.

Analytical Lenses

There are many (often overlapping) lenses through which to analyze education policy – as a process of rational decision making, as a result of pluralistic contestation between interest groups, as one subset of public policy, as a scapegoat and alleged remedy for economic inequality, as a product of a corporate-governmental elite protecting its interests, as ‘political spectacle,’ as a consequence of social movements, as class, race, or gender based, etc. Perhaps education policy exhibits different characteristics at different times. You decide what lens (-es) you want to develop in this course. Your midterm exam will use the lens(-es) you develop to analyze an educational policy.

Week One – Sept. 2

Introductions, Personal Reflections, and Questions

- What, if anything, do policies actually *do*?
- What, if anything, has education policy done for *you*?
- What is ‘good’ policy - and how do we define ‘good?’
- What is ‘just’ policy and how do we define ‘justice?’
- What are the relations between federal, state, and district policies and school practice?
- What happens to policy as it is implemented?
- Of what analytical importance is the *language* used to write a policy?

What is a policy analysis lens?

How does one use an analytical lens to critique policies and policy texts?

Description of policy brief writing assignment.

Week Two – Sept. 9

Is there a ‘culture’ of policy making at the federal, state, or local levels and if so, how does that affect urban students and educators?

Reading: *Political Spectacle*, M. L. Smith. (Whole book)

Week Three – Sept. 16

Are elite groups involved in creating federal policy regarding public issues, including education?

Reading: *Who Rules America?* (5th ed.) W. Domhoff. (Whole book).

Political and Economic Contexts of Education Policy

No policies, including education policies, exist in a social vacuum. All policies are social constructions, created in legislatures and other policy bodies in response to some stimulus – educational, technological, political, economic, cultural, or social. This section of the course focuses on political, economic, and social change stimuli to educational policy making.

Week Four – Sept. 23 (Sept. 30 no class; GC closed)

What political and economic factors played a role in the ways in which cities and city schools developed in the U.S.? What does this history suggest about school reform in urban areas today?

Reading: *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform.* J. Anyon (Whole book)

Week Five – Oct. 7 (Oct. 14 no class; Monday schedule)

Does contemporary public policy play a role in the maintenance of urban community and school district poverty? How can we solve the problems of poverty that plague urban communities and schools? What roles have social movements played in educational policy production? How can classrooms and schools become social movement building spaces?

Reading: *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement.* J. Anyon. (Whole book)

Cultural Contexts of Education Policy

In most cities, the majority of students are children and youth of color. Many are immigrants or children of immigrants. Does, and should, education policy respond to the family cultures of these students? How and to what end?

Week Six – Oct. 21

What policies would substantially improve the education of low-income urban Black and Latino/a children and youth? What policies would benefit immigrant students?

Readings:

Theresa Perry, (2002). *Young, Gifted and Black* (Whole book)

Robert C. Smith. *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*
(Chapters 7, 8, and 9)
Luis Reyes on Bilingual Education (*Harvard Ed Review* handout)

Mainstream Views of Policy Origination and Construction

Week Seven – Oct. 28

How do these mainstream lenses compare with what we have read so far?

Readings: Deborah Stone – conflict model ((handout)
Kingdon – rational decision making (handout)
Chubb and Moe – the market model (handout)

Analysis of Selected Education Policies and Policy Issues

In the following weeks, each student, or pair of students, will introduce the analysis of an educational policy or issue topic below. The analysis you present should utilize questions like those that follow. *You will also design and briefly present a policy or set of policies that you think would address the issues or problems raised by the readings.*

****Please meet with me the week before you are scheduled to present.*** Please produce a one-page document describing your analysis and your policy, and distribute it at the beginning of class.

Analytical Questions

1. What is the educational issue or problem – how is the problem defined? What educational policy or set of policies address or relate to that issue? What groups were instrumental in development of the policy (-ies)?
2. Does the policy respond to, or relate in some way to, underlying political, economic, or cultural problems or issues? If so, how? Are there public policies that the educational policy might be a substitute for?
3. Describe any culture of policy that you see that surrounds and informs the educational policy and its implementation. Is there ‘political spectacle’ involved? Why?
4. Whose interests are served by the policy as written, and as implemented? Are there groups who win and who lose as a result of the policy?
5. Are there unintended consequences of the policy in schools and/or communities? How do these differ from the intended consequences?
6. What are the implications of the policy for different races, social classes, genders, or sexual orientations?
7. Does the policy solve the educational problem it was alleged to address or supposed to solve? Why or why not? Did it solve any other (e.g., political, economic, or bureaucratic) problem?

8. What policy or set of policies will YOU design to address the problems or issues highlighted by the readings? This is a required part of your presentation.

Week Eight – Nov.4 Midterm Essay Due Today

Essay. What is your analytical lens for viewing education policy? Explain your lens, quoting both positively and negatively from sources we've read. Apply your lens to a policy or policies of your choice. (No more than 10-12 ds pages; hard copies, please.)

Week Eight, Continued –

What should be the function of governmental education policy be at the federal, state and district, levels? Should and do these policies advance the cause of equity?

Topic 1: Federal Education Policies

Reading: Anyon, 2005. *Harvard Education Review* (electronic)

Presenter(s):

Topic 2: Local (District) Education Policies

Reading: Dorothy Shipp, "Pulling Together: Civic Capacity and Urban School Reform" (electronic)

Guest:

Week Nine – Nov. 11

What are the origins and trajectories of privatization efforts? What has been the effect of privatization on education?

Reading: *The Shock Doctrine*. Naomi Klein (Chapters TBA)

Electronic Handout on Privatization in Education

Presenter(s):

Week Ten – Nov. 18

Does community organizing for school reform actually improve schooling for urban students? Does it increase community power? What policies are needed to encourage educators and community members and groups to work together?

Topic 1: Community/Parent Engagement

Reading: Center for Immigrant Families Report. (Handout)

Center for Community Change Report – Recent Report on Community Organizing and School Reform from Annenberg Institute (electronic)

Guests: Middle School Collaborative; NYCORE; CC9

Week Eleven – Nov. 25

Learning to do” time?” Do urban schools contribute to a school to prison pipeline for low-income youth of color?

Week Eleven Cont’d

Topic 1: School Discipline, Zero Tolerance, and the School to Prison Pipeline

Presenter(s): _____

Readings: *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity.* Ann Ferguson. (Whole book)

Do queer students experience discrimination in schools? If so, can policy legislate remedies?

Topic 2: Lesbian/Gay//Bisexual/Transgender Students

Presenter(s):

Reading: C.Lugg, “Sissies, Faggots, Lezzies, and Dykes: Gender, Sexual Orientation, and a New Politics of Education?” (electronic)

Week Twelve – Dec. 2

More and more low-income urban students are starting college. What are the consequences of this increase in access, and what policies should be put in place to increase the graduation rates of these students?

Topic 1: College and the low-income student

Presenter(s):

Readings: *After Admission: From College Access to College Success.* (Especially Chapters 1, 5, 11)

Why are urban school systems typically under-financed? Why does Wall St. contribute only 10% of NYC taxes? How can we encourage the implementation of progressive state financial restructuring remedies that have already been enacted in some states?

Topic 2: School Finance

Presenter(s)

Readings: Rebell, Michael. (2005). “Adequacy Litigations: A New Path to Equity?” (Handout)
Anyon, “Who Pays? Corporate Taxes and NYC School District Finances.” (electronic)

Week Thirteen – Dec. 9

Is bilingual education a policy to fight for? What are the needs of English Language Learners?

Topic 1: Bilingual Education, “ELLs”

Readings: *Contested Policy*, G. San Miguel (Whole book)
Luis Reyes *Harvard Ed Review* article handout
Presenter(s):

Guest: Professor Kate Menken, Graduate Center

Grading Policy:

Midterm Essay = 35%

Policy Brief = 35%

In-Class Presentations and Contribution to discussions = 30%

Readings (* = **Purchase or otherwise obtain**)

*Anyon, Jean. (1997). *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform*. NY: Teachers College Press.

*Anyon, Jean. (2005). *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement*. New York: Routledge.

*Domhoff, G. William. (2005). Fifth Ed. *Who Rules America? Power and Politics*. New York: McGraw Hill.

*Ferguson, Ann. (2001). *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. University of Michigan Press.

*Klein, Naomi. (2008 paperback). *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. NY: Picador Press.

*Perry, Theresa, Ed. (2003). *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students*. Boston: Beacon.

*San Miguel, Guadalupe. (2004). *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the U.S.: 1960-2001*. University of North Texas Press.

*Smith, Mary Lee. (2004). *Political Spectacle and the Fate of American Schools*. NY: Taylor and Francis.

*Smith, Robert C. (2006). *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press.

Main Education Policy Journals

Among the most widely read educational journals are *Harvard Educational Review*, *Teachers College Record*, and *Educational Researcher*. These aren't focused explicitly on policy, but most articles have important policy implications.

Education Policy: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Policy and Practice. (Mainstream, but sometimes critical. Mike Apple writes a column.)

Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis (an AERA journal). (Mainstream.)

Educational Policy Analysis Archives. (Electronic, widely accessed by thousands of AERA members). Gene V. Glass, Ed. In English, Portuguese, and Spanish.)

Journal of Education Policy. (Best British journal, Stephen J. Ball, Ed.)

Educational Administration Quarterly: The Journal of Leadership for Effective and Equitable Organizations. (Can have critical articles.)

Phi Delta Kappan: Journal of Policy and Practice. ("Kappan"). Debate on controversial topics, written for the K-12 educators rather than the academy.

Brookings Papers on Education Policy. (Diane Ravitch, et al; conservative politically.)

The Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies. Electronic. Peter McLaren and Dave Hill, Eds. Marxist, critical approach.

Rethinking Schools. (Not an academic journal, but most articles have important policy implications. Very progressive, politically.)

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Policy Brief Assignment

Advice: The problem you write your brief to address should be directly connected to the problem you are thinking about addressing in your dissertation.

Each student will pick a problem facing urban education in the U.S. and write a policy brief addressed to a specific person or organization. The addressee should have the interest or influence to consider the brief and its suggested policies – for example, a state education official or elected politician, mayor, district superintendent or chancellor, school administrator, union official, principal, teacher, parent group, community organization, school reform group, etc.

If you were a policy analyst working for a firm, district, or university, you might carry out empirical research to determine what policies/strategies are needed and what policies you will recommend. *You are not doing that kind of brief here.* You will be analyzing *existing* research in order to make your policy recommendation(s).

The brief should include:

1) Statement of the problem.

Identify the educational problem your brief addresses. What is the problem and how do you define it? (Your analytical lens may help you define the problem)

2) Background and reasons for the problem.

Why does this problem exist? Give a brief summary of key history, trends, and current research relating to why the problem exists. What conditions created it? (Will your history include any underlying economic or political history or trends?)

3) Current policies that (attempt to) address the problem.

Briefly describe the policy solutions presently in place, if any. Briefly give research, policy, practical, or other reasons you think these solutions are not effective and need to be changed or replaced. (What does your analysis or lens say are the reasons why the extant policies are or are not effective?)

4) Your policy advice – The policy solution(s) you propose.

Describe your own proposed policy solution or solutions, making sure your suggested policy(-ies) flow out of your analysis of the issue. For example, if the education problem

you identify has *economic* causes (say, neighborhood poverty) then the solutions you choose ought to include *economic policies*.

Be sure to identify solutions that would be appropriate for the person or group you are addressing. You want to be as persuasive as possible. Be sure to provide reasons why your policy proposal would be superior to extant policies.

5) Make a Cover Page with Bullets.

Your brief should have a one-page Executive Summary that has the contents of the brief presented in easy-to-read 'bullets.' **DON'T FORGET THIS. YOUR BRIEF PROBABLY WON'T BE READ BY YOUR TARGET IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN EYE-CATCHING COVER PAGE.**

NOTES

1. The brief should be about 15 – 20 double spaced pages, not including the bibliography. Please hand it in as a hard copy.
2. You do not need to cost out your policy suggestions.

At a number of times during the semester, we will discuss your brief and its progress in class. ***Starting in the 9th week of class you should make an appointment to see me with a draft outline of your brief.***

The brief is due two weeks after the last day of the semester.