Teaching in Today's Global Classroom: Policy Analysis in Cross-National Settings

Douglas J. Besharov
School of Public Policy,
University of Maryland

Jennifer Oser
Annenberg School for Communication,
University of Pennsylvania

Although the center of gravity of policy research and analysis remains in the United States, the rest of the world is rapidly catching up. The same is true for teaching policy analysis and evaluation, which has become a global enterprise. New schools of public policy, or at least new public policy programs, have been established around the world and many more are coming. Although grounded in their home country's political and programmatic context, these educational programs have much in common, including similar curricula that focus on quantitative methods, program evaluation, and systematic policy analysis. The teaching materials are frequently the same, and in most places, instruction is in English.

The promise of such efforts is great. To the extent that systematic approaches to policy analysis and evaluation lead to better government and private-sector decisions, the result can be better lives for tens of millions of people. One need not look any further than the unprecedented successes when modern analytic tools were applied to the age-old problems of poverty, malnutrition, and poor health in developing countries.

The challenges, however, are many. Around the world, political institutions vary dramatically, so that focusing narrowly on a home country's political system will not address the needs of students planning to work elsewhere. Teaching about how the committee structure of the U.S. Congress fragments and often stymies decision making, for example, may help students who wish to specialize in U.S. policy, but it is of limited use to students specializing in other political systems. Further, in political systems with less freedom and democracy, it can be

unacceptable (and dangerous) to honestly evaluate current government policy practices. In such cases, templates of policy analysis that emphasize frank critiquing of policies and programs may require substantial modification.

At an interpersonal level, having students from diverse cultural backgrounds in the same classroom requires heightened sensitivity to differing cultural and behavioral norms. In the United States, for example, students are typically encouraged to be active participants in a classroom discussion, if not debate. In other nations, though, the cultural norm may be to listen and accept what the instructor says.

The result is a growing body of literature on the internationalization of policy instruction—but usually from the fairly narrow perspective of its implications for or in relation to American instructional programs. Over a decade ago, for example, an article in this journal proposed an agenda for strengthening the teaching of public affairs from an international and comparative perspective—to decrease American parochialism and to better understand the United States in context (Klingner & Washington, 2000). In a similar vein, a review of the international activities of American public policy schools at the turn of the century adopted a distinctly American perspective to international outreach and curriculum transformation (Devereux & Durning, 2001). Given a general American-centric orientation in policy research and instruction, it is hardly surprising that a main trend identified in a recent systematic review of emerging global Masters of Public Policy programs was an attempt to use normative policy analysis approaches precisely as developed in the United States (Geva-May, Nasi, Turrini, & Scott, 2008).

Recognizing and lamenting this U.S.-oriented bias following a previous APPAM teaching workshop, Fritzen (2008, p. 212) noted, "We in the emerging programs are drawing from the same (often too well-worn) bag of pedagogical tricks," even though the existing tricks do not necessarily match the changing landscape of worldwide programs of instruction.

To encourage a more global (and modernized) perspective on policy instruction, the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) held a two-day teaching workshop (November 2–3, 2011) in association with the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. The workshop, titled "Teaching in Today's Classroom: Policy Analysis, Statistics and Technology in Cross-National Settings," built on APPAM's prior experience of holding periodic teaching workshops that aim to bring together scholars, instructors, and practitioners to share ideas and resources on policy education that are then communicated to a broader audience (Reingold & O'Hare 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d). The workshop featured papers by a diverse group of teachers from around the globe and with expertise in a wide range of subject fields.

Workshop panels explored various topics relevant to today's increasingly global classrooms. A panel on "Teaching Policy Analysis" included questions of how to incorporate program design principles into the policy curriculum. An international focus was introduced in a panel on "Teaching in Cross-National Classrooms," which covered topics relevant to non-U.S. classrooms as well as in

American policy programs where student bodies are generally becoming more international in makeup. (Topics covered in this panel included cross-cultural lessons from teaching as a Fulbright Scholar in China, reflections on teaching American students about cross-national governance systems, and insights on adapting American pedagogies for instruction in European policy programs.) A panel on "Using Technology In and Out of the Classroom" included a three-dimensional visualization of curriculum as a tool for quality assessment, student use of web-based platforms (such as Weebly) to publish their policy research and their professional portfolio online, and the use of simulation software for policy modeling. A panel on "Teaching Microeconomics and Statistics" tackled the perennial challenge of teaching these subjects effectively in a compressed professional master's degree, including a review of pedagogies for promoting active learning in the classroom and a comparison of students' academic statistical software usage versus employer expectations. Finally, a panel on "Teaching Large Classes in Policy Schools" reviewed lessons learned on how to cover a large amount of material effectively in introductory classes, as well as insights from implementing team-based learning methods in large classrooms.

A select group of five of the papers presented at the workshop are included in this symposium. (All the papers can be found at www.umdcipe.org/conferences/Classroom/agenda_and_abstracts.html.)

In "Teaching Public Policy: Linking Policy and Politics," Lawrence Mead of New York University argues for a better integration of policy and political analysis in contemporary policy research and instruction. Drawing on his experience of teaching courses for undergraduate and graduate students, Mead suggests how to model policy instruction more closely on the "actual process of statecraft." As an example of how policy can influence politics, he discusses how the desire to balance the budget led to procedural changes in the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990. Conversely, to highlight how politics may influence policy, he describes how, over time, welfare reform became focused on putting welfare mothers to work, instead of on other less popular goals such as encouraging marriage.

In this effort to link policy and politics, Mead places public policy as an academic discipline in clear historical and scholastic context. He sketches the normative versus empirical dimensions of political science and economics, and he connects contemporary policy teaching to its disciplinary roots in the academy. One origin is Aristotle's discussion of politics as the master science, meaning the pursuit by which a community might achieve the good life. Through his reflections on public policy as an academic discipline, Mead encourages the readers to go beyond the narrowness and scholasticism of so much contemporary policy instruction.

The connection of policy students to clients is an important part of this policy/politics linkage, according to Rachel Meltzer of the New School's Milano School of International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy. In "Practice Makes Perfect: Teaching Policy Analysis through Integrated Client-Based Projects," she provides an overview of the client orientation of American graduate policy analysis programs,

concluding that client-oriented courses are often relegated to a single capstone course at the end of the degree. In other words, they tend not to incorporate a client-oriented approach that integrates client-based projects throughout the curriculum.

Following an overview of the "state of the art" in client-oriented instruction, Meltzer illustrates the multiple advantages of a highly client-based approach through an in-depth description of the Milano School's integrated program. In it, students gain experience in ongoing and diverse settings for practicing the art and craft of real-time policy analysis, learn how to build evidence-based arguments for a range of policy topics, and hone their skills in effectively communicating their analysis both in writing and in oral presentations. We learn how a synergy is created between the instructional benefit for students, the needs of outside clients, and the graduate program's reputation for excellence among policy analysts and students.

In "Teaching Policy Analysis in Cross-National Settings: A System Approach," Claudia Scott of Victoria University of Wellington and The Australia and New Zealand School of Government adds two new dimensions to considering the role of clients in policy instruction. First, Scott's "system approach" argues that although the dominant orientation in the literature is toward a single client, in practice policy analysts and leaders must consider multiple actors and institutions in order to foster effective policy design. Being cross-national, the course is situated in an executive degree program in the Australia and New Zealand School of Government. Neither government follows the American tradition of the role of policy professionals; rather, they follow the Westminster tradition of policy development by a professional service, offering "free and frank" apolitical advice to government.

Given the executive students' experience as government workers, one of the instructional challenges Scott notes is the need to expose and inspire them to comprehend the broader system in which they can operate effectively—a system beyond the familiar walls of government institutions and relationships. For example, Scott assigns participants the task of completing a policy outcomes matrix in which they are required to include at least one private sector or community sector option among the variety of options that they design and evaluate. In the process of describing her experience in teaching a system approach, Scott reviews a range of tools and methods that can be used to enhance students' policy analysis skills, including systems mapping, causal mapping, intervention logic, reverse brainstorming, and targeted coaching methods.

A global challenge but also an opportunity in contemporary policy teaching is integrating online resources into classroom instruction. Examples of this integration range from using online courses (e.g., "Coursera"), website construction tools, and a vast range of informational material that is available online. In "Wikipedia as a Tool for Teaching Policy Analysis and Improving Public Policy Content Online," Donna Lind Infeld and William C. Adams of the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration at George Washington University describe how to conduct an integrated online research

and writing assignment. As a dynamic and demanding classroom assignment, they have students edit a Wikipedia entry based on their own policy research paper. Infeld and Adams challenge us to embrace technology and online resources creatively—in ways that support student research, analysis, and teamwork skills beyond classroom walls.

Although online resources in English have a global impact, one of the instructional challenges ahead will be the ongoing development of contextually sensitive pedagogical materials for different cross-national settings. In "Developing Policy Analysis 'Flight Simulators' in Different National Settings," Jennifer Oser, Alma Gadot-Perez, and Itzhak Galnoor review their experience in creating a series of original instructional case studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Federmann School of Public Policy and Government in Israel. Building on Stokes's (1986) classic analogy of the case method, combined with policy workshops as a "flight simulator," the authors mine their experience to discuss generalizable lessons for creating policy flight simulators in different cross-national settings. For example, the article identifies the added value of identifying "foundational issues" in a given national context, and front-loading case studies on these topics. In Israel, for example, the topic of values as a basis for policy making (examined through an original case study on efforts to institute a stock market tax) was identified as a foundational issue that merits early attention in a course so that subsequent case studies and analyses can easily reference this topic.

Oser and colleagues include a "Political Strategy Appendix" exercise to accompany policy papers as an example of how contextual pedagogy may lead to an enrichment of materials for policy instruction both within and beyond U.S. borders. The "Flight Simulator" discussion of adapting policy instruction materials in different institutional and political settings comes full circle back to Mead's contribution: to meaningfully link policy and politics, a global era of policy instruction must increasingly strive to home in on how this linkage may differ in varied national contexts.

These papers, and, for that matter, the entire APPAM workshop, only scratch the surface of what is needed for globalized public policy education in a truly cross-national context. In disciplines like public policy and public affairs, which rely on stages and systems as useful heuristics, adaptation of these heuristics to complex and varied contexts is the key to making this global expansion a meaningful one.

In the longer term, it seems sure that evolving technological capacities will come into play. Many universities throughout the world, for example, are already creating Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), which are enrolling tens of thousands of students from around the world for online courses via the Web. With Web-based technologies, will it still be necessary for students (and teachers) to travel thousands of miles to learn (and teach) in the same room? Probably not.

We hope that the articles in this symposium spark further innovation and creativity in the years to come.

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Douglas J. Besharov is a professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, where he teaches courses on poverty, welfare, children and families, policy analysis, program evaluation, and performance management. He is also a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, where he leads a program on international policy exchanges. Between 1985 and 2009, he was also a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research in Washington, D.C. Between 1975 and 1979, he was the first director of the U.S. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. In 2008, he was president of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) and is currently APPAM's International Conference Coordinator. He is also director of the University's Welfare Reform Academy and the Center for International Policy Exchanges. Among his 18 books is *Recognizing Child Abuse: A Guide for the Concerned*, a book designed to help professionals and laypersons identify and report suspected child abuse. He has written over 250 articles, and has contributed to the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post.

Jennifer Oser earned her PhD at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Federmann School of Public Policy and Government. She is currently a postdoctoral visiting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania and a senior postdoctoral researcher on a European Research Council project on Democratic Linkages between Citizens and the State. Her fields of research include social policy, political participation, and participatory inequality, and she has taught in courses on policy analysis and organizing at Harvard University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the University of Pennsylvania. E-mail: oser@post.harvard.edu.