

Cultural Pluralism, Language, and Education Policy

Advanced Policy Analysis and Methods

Prof. Bruce Fuller, Graduate School of Education
Mondays, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. – Spring 2006-07

Starting Questions, Conceptions of Policy Problems

Cultural pluralism in America both celebrates and stigmatizes certain social groups. Race, language, and social practices – signaling difference vis-à-vis the mainstream -- continue to disadvantage certain children in U.S. society and in our public schools.

Children's lack of English proficiency and mainstream cultural knowledge, for instance, is seen as a major impediment to school achievement. So, government goes about trying to incorporate “peripheral groups,” especially immigrant and ethnic minority children, into the dominant forms of education and economic production.

At the same time, all bounded groups reproduce cultural forms, social supports, and language to conserve their communities, involving rules of membership, social and economic roles, and shared identities. During certain policy episodes, minority rights or community building efforts have eclipsed political action aimed solely at assimilation. This includes the community action movement of the 1970s, the rise of bilingual education, and public support of cultural segregation via charter schools.

In some ways, “we are all multiculturalists now” (as Nathan Glazer said), with the rise of cultural pluralism now influencing political and educational institutions. In another two generations, what will the “mainstream” look like in California and other large urban states? How do we think about “core” cultural forms and “peripheral” forms?

These cross-currents present wonderfully challenging dilemmas and empirical questions for policy makers, along with the analysts and intellectuals that advise political and institutional leaders.

This new course uses the lens of language and education policy to ask, What empirical methods are helpful in identifying effective forms of collective action that serve immigrant and later-generation ethnic groups? We will focus largely on Asian and Latino groups and problems. We will examine how to distinguish between *philosophical* questions (e.g., what’s the goal implied by *effective* collective action) versus questions are informed by *empirical* evidence (to help define “the problem” more precisely, or to weigh the effects of differing policy remedies). This is an advanced policy analysis course.

Throughout the semester we will explore these fundamental questions –

1. What problems do immigrant and later-generation children face inside schools? How are these problems created by a subgroup's location in the mainstream society or particular sector of the economy?
2. How do policy makers and other elites define these educational "problems"? What assumptions are made about families and children? What are the philosophical and empirical pillars on which policy options are built?
3. What is known about effective policy interventions? How do policy actors define "effective"? What problems – lodged in bounded communities, families, and schools – are to be addressed by alternative policies?

Structure of the Course

Our 15 weeks together will be split into three segments --

- **Demographic shifts** in the diverse social structure, languages, and cultural commitments of North American families. We will focus on the strengths, social resources, and economics of immigrant and second-generation Asian and Latino families (about 5 weeks).
- The **state's responses** to cultural and linguistic pluralism. We focus mainly on bilingual policies in U.S. and California contexts. The dilemmas that arise when government advances mono-cultural *or* multicultural policies. Instances will be examined where the state advances pluralism, or at least decentralized authority, for ethnic groups and local organizations (4 weeks).
- **School and classroom dynamics**. We will examine how policies are implemented inside schools, attempting to alter the institutionalized practices of teachers and "mainstream educators". The recasting of school organizations and pedagogical practices bring to life the human-scale dilemmas that arise for educators, parents, and children alike (4.5 weeks).

Study teams – policy analysis projects. Seminar members will pull together in 3-4 person teams to analyze a new or existing data set, pertaining to a policy-relevant problem. These analyses or pilot studies will be presented in the semester's final two weeks. Study teams will find an existing data set and delve into topics pertinent to the course, employing analytic techniques from qualitative or quantitative traditions. No field work is required but is an option. We also will explore existing data.

Cutting across institutional levels of analysis (society, state, school, cultural group), we will delve into the tools offered by four major disciplines: anthropology, economics, linguistics, and sociology. My pedagogical aim is to acquaint you with how careful policy analysts draw on the explanatory theories and methods (quantitative or qualitative) sustained by these disciplines.

About every other week we delve into a methodological reading or two, covering qualitative and quantitative methods that illuminate a policy relevant problem. This can include basic research, anchored in a discipline-based line of thinking. The reading list, in general, draws on various philosophical and positivist frames to help us analyze both normative and empirical issues.

A basic education or public policy course, or introductory work in applied anthropology, sociology, or socio-linguistics, is required. I will assume that you have received fundamental training in qualitative and/or quantitative research methods. Without this preparation you will not be able to benefit from readings and seminar discussions.

Responsibilities. (1) Come each week fully prepared to dig seriously into readings, topics... this is an advanced seminar, 30% of semester grade. (2) Facilitate seminar discussion of three readings, three-page briefing memo for each, 30%. (3) Contribute to empirical work, analysis, and 25-page study report with your study team, 40%. The final study report is due Monday, May 14th, two weeks after our final seminar meeting.

Readings. We will read most chapters in two books –

- Portes & Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*.
- Valdés, *Learning and Not Learning English: Latino Students in American Schools*.

The reader will include the following journal papers and chapters (plus about six methodological readings) –

Weekly Schedule

17 January (Wednesday) Organizing meeting, one hour.

UNIT 1. Demographic developments and the social and economic contexts of education policy problems

22 January How are public problems, and those of subgroups, defined? Why focus on policy remedies? The interplay between policy and practices.

- Garcia & Cuñillar, Who are these linguistically and culturally diverse students?
- Hacsí, *Children as Pawns*. Chapter 2, Is bilingual education a good idea?
- Huntington, The Hispanic challenge.

29 January Demographic developments, social contexts

- August & Shanahan, *Developing Literacy in Second-language Learners*, chapters 1-2. METHODS.
- Louie, Second-generation pessimism and optimism: How Chinese and Dominicans understand education and mobility?

1 February (Thursday) Dinner and discussion

- Portes & Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4.

5 February Social and cultural influences on children's identity, social behavior, and literacy development

- Portes & Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, Chapters 7 and 8.
- Goldenberg, Rueda, & August, Sociocultural influences on the literacy attainment of language-minority children. Chapter 11.

12 February California contexts and the social assets of immigrant groups

- Hayes-Bautista, *La Nueva California* (intro and chapters 1, 3, 5, 6).
- Zhou & Bankston, *Growing Up American*. Introduction, chapters 6, 7.
- District collaborative – background and updates (PACE).
POLICY ANALYSIS – BUT METHOD?

19 February [President's Day]

UNIT 2. State responses to pluralism – alternative policy approaches

22 February Dinner and discussion -- major policy issues, poverty, and community contexts

- Tienda & Mitchell (eds.), *Hispanics and the Future of America* (chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6).

26 February Language policy, philosophy, politics

- U.S. Congress, Title III – Language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students (PL 107-110).
- Snow, Rationales for native language instruction (in *Bilingual Education...*).
- Schmidt, *Language Policy and Identity Politics* (chapters 1, 3, 5, 7).

5 March Differing perspectives on language policy

- Spolsky, *Language Policy* (chapters 1, 7, 8, 11).
- Hakuta & August, *Improving schooling for language-minority children*. Selected chapters.

12 March Policy action and deeper institutional pressures

- Fuller, Livas, & Pai, *Standardized Childhood* (chapter 7), Early learning in Latino communities
- Wiley & Wright, *Against the undertow: Language-minority education policy and politics in the age of accountability*.

UNIT 3. Policy implementation – school and classroom dynamics

19 March Policy case study: Proposition 227 and its school-level effects

- Parrish / AIR, *Effects of implementation of Proposition 227 on the education of English learners, K-12*
- Paredes, *How Prop. 227 influences the language dynamics of a first- and second-generation math lesson*. METHODS.

26 March [Spring break]

2 April Theoretical (causal) accounts and using random assignment to evaluate bilingual programs

- Francis, Lesaux, & August, *Language of instruction*. METHODS.

- Cummins, Alternative paradigms in bilingual education research: Does theory have a place? METHODS.
- OPTIONAL: Boote & Beile, Scholars before researchers: Centrality of literature review. METHODS.

9 April [American Education Research Association conference, AERA]

16 April Quantitative studies of family practices, community context, and school achievement

- Wong Fillmore, When learning a second language means losing the first. METHODS.
- Portes & Hao, *E pluribus unum*: Bilingualism and loss of language in the second generation. METHODS.
- Portes & Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, Chapters 9.

23 April Qualitative studies of schools, classrooms

- August & Erickson, Qualitative studies of classroom and school practices. METHODS.
- Vald s, *Learning and Not Learning English*. Chapters 1 thru 5, 8. METHODS.

30 April Study team presentations – data analysis

7 May No seminar meeting – study team work on data analysis reports

Data analysis reports due, *Monday 14 May, 5:00 p.m.*
Hard copy please – Tolman Hall 3659
