New Class in Winter 2016:
The Role of Research in Policy and Practice

INSTRUCTORS

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OVERVIEW

There is currently more talk than ever about the role research should play in improving educational practice. Researchers wonder why some research ends up being influential in policy and practice while other research does not. Funders want to find ways that their investment in research can be more influential. And, with the recent move toward evidence-based policy making in many countries, advocates argue that policy makers and educational leaders should be using the best information available to inform consequential decisions, especially when it affects children and youth. This issue has been the focus of considerable debate in the US. Three major task force reports have investigated the relationship between research and practice, calling for changes in business as usual (Donovan et al., 2003; National Academy of Education, 1999; National Research Council, 2012). These reports have generated heated debate within the academy (See, for example, Berliner, 2002; Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002; Feuer, Towne & Shavelson, 2002a; 2002b).

At the same time, there are also efforts to create new mechanisms for more continuous and more productive exchange between research and practice for educational improvement, including such approaches as research-practice partnerships (e.g. Strategic Education Research Partnership and Chicago Consortium for School Research), design-based implementation research, state-level data partnerships (e.g. Calder), and mechanisms for creating greater access to research (e.g. What Works Clearinghouse).

Much of the discussion about the relationship between research and policy and practice is normative: people argue about how policy makers or practitioners *should* use research or how the research enterprise *should* be reorganized. **In this class we will investigate what we know from empirical research about the role of research in policy and practice and the efficacy of different approaches for bringing the two closer together.**

The course will be organized into three parts. Part I (The Rhetoric) reviews different arguments about the source of the challenges of bringing research to bear on policy and practice. Part II (The Reality) reviews empirical research about the pathways between research, policy, and practice. We will pay particular attention to how different conceptual frameworks enable researchers to investigate contrasting dimensions of the issue. Thread throughout is Part III (The Solutions). Throughout the quarter, we will investigate different approaches to bringing research to bear on policy and practice. We will investigate design-research, research-practice partnerships, linking and translation organizations (e.g. Regional Education Labs), and other approaches. In this section, we will couple empirical articles about the process and outcomes of these approaches with visits from researchers and practitioners approaches to talk about the nature of their work.

COURSE READINGS

Course readings are available for download on Canvas.

REQUIREMENTS

Research paper (60% of grade). Students can choose one of the two options discussed below. Both options will require substantial independent reading on the topic of interest, plus a reasoned discussion of methods.

> Option 1: Write a proposal to engage in an empirical study of some facet of research use. For example, you could write a study of the role of power and politics in research use at the district level, or the impact of design-based partnership on changes in teachers' practice among participating teachers, or the nature of conceptual use of research by school leaders. The paper should include a problem statement, literature review, conceptual framework, and methods section. Paper should be no longer than 20 double-spaced pages.

> Option 2: Design a study using one of the partnership approaches we discuss in class (e.g. design-based research, research alliance, translational research, etc.). The paper should include: an overview of the topic of study, a discussion of the partnership approach you select to study it (what it is and why it's an appropriate vehicle for the study), an methods section, a discussion of the affordances and limitations of this approach to partnership, and strategies for mitigating these challenges. Paper should be no longer than 20 double-spaced pages.

Due dates:

> Submit topic for review: Monday January 25, 2016

> Meet with Alice for progress check and problem solving: week of February 22, 2016

> Final paper due: Wednesday March 16, 2016

Partnership Analysis (30% of grade). Each student will select one form of partnership to analyze and critique. Options include: translational research, research alliance, design research, network improvement communities, and participatory research. Students will read the additional readings listed in the syllabus related to the approach, write an analysis of this approach to partnership, and prepare questions for the visitor representing the approach. The analysis should address the following questions: 1) what are the key characteristics of this approach to research; 2) what are the assumptions underlying the approach about the nature of the research/practice problem? What are the affordances of the approach? What are its limitations? What evidence is there of the success of this approach in building closer relationships between research and practice? The written analysis is due the class where we discuss the approach in question. Analysis should be no longer than 8 double-spaced pages. Sign up for a partnership to analyze by class number 2. Only one person per partnership.

Attendance and participation (10% of grade). This class involves a lot of in-class activities and discussion. For this reason, class attendance and participation are essential. It is also crucial to read the materials actively and critically, identifying major issues raised and debates they engender. The participation grade will reflect the degree to which you come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Any unexcused absences or more than two excused absences for the quarter will result in a reduction in your grade. Excused absences require instructor permission *in advance of the class in question.*

GRADING SCHEME

A	100	to 94
A-	< 94	to 90
B+	< 90	to 87
B	< 87	to 84
B-	< 84	to 80
C+	< 80	to 77
C	< 77	to 74
C-	< 74	to 70
D	< 70	to 64
D-	< 64	to 61
F	< 61	to 0

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Students with disabilities seeking accommodations are encouraged to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 467-5530 or ssd@northwestern.edu. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall. SSD also has an excellent web site, which is viewable at: http://www.northwestern.edu/disability/

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in this course are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be sent as email attachments as well as delivered in printed form. Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit:
http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html.

Part I: The Rhetoric

Week 1: January 4th - Introduction

- Overview of the class
- What is the problem with the relationship between research and policy and practice?

Week 2: January 11th – What's the problem?

- Slavin, R. E. (2004). Education research can and must address "what works" questions. *Educational Researcher, 33*(1), 27-28.

- Cook, T. D. (2002). Randomized experiments in educational policy research: A critical examination of the reasons the educational evaluation community has offered for not doing them. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24*(3), 175-199.

- Burkhardt, H., & Schoenfeld, A. H. (2003). Improving educational research: Toward a more useful, more influential, and better-funded enterprise. *Educational Researcher, 32*(9), 3-14.

- Kennedy, M. M. (1997). The connection between research and practice. *Educational Researcher, 26*(7), 4-12.

- Benson, L., Harkavy, I. & Puckett, J. (2000). An implementation revolution as a strategy for fulfilling the democratic promise of university-community partnerships: Penn-West Philadelphia as an experiment in progress. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 29*(1), 24-45.

Week 3: NO CLASS, MARTIN LUTHER KING'S BIRTHDAY

Part II: The Reality and Proposed Solutions

Week 4: January 25 – The nature of decision making

- National Research Council (2012). *Using science as evidence in public policy.* Washington D.C.: The National Academies Press.

- Weiss, C. H. (1980). Knowledge creep and decision accretion. *Science Communication*, *1*, 381-404.

- Kennedy, M. M. (2005). Chapter 7: Sources of improvement in teaching. *Inside Teaching: How classroom life undermines reform.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- o Optional. If you would like more context for the study, it can be found in Chapter 1: The mysterious gap between reform ideas and everyday teaching.

Third hour: Translational research (Note: Patti will join us from 3-4 CST)
Special guest: Patti Chamberlain, Oregon Social Learning Center

Required:

- Woolf, S. H. (2008). The meaning of translational research and why it matters. *Jama*, *299*(2), 211-213.

Additional:
- Palinkas, L., Short, C., & Wong, M. (2015). *Research-practice-policy partnerships for implementation of evidence-based practices in child welfare and child mental health*. NYC: William T. Grant Foundation.

- Traynor, R., Dobbins, M., & DeCorby, K.(2015). Challenges of partnership research: Insights from collaborative partnership in evidence-informed public health decision making. *Evidence & Policy, 11*(1), 99-109.

- Neal, J. W., Neal, Z. P., Kornbluh, M., Mills, K. J., & Lawlor, J. A. (2015). Brokering the Research–Practice Gap: A typology. *American journal of community psychology*, *56*(3-4), 422-435.

Week 5: February 1 - Translation models

- Mahoney, J. L., & Zigler, E. F. (2006). Translating science to policy under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Lessons from the national evaluation of the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *27*(4), 282-294.

- Dynarski, M. (2006). Advancing the use of scientifically based research in forming policy: A response to Mahoney and Zigler. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *27*(4), 295-297.

- Greenhalgh, T., Robert, G., MacFarlane, F., Bate, P., & Kyriakidou, O. (2004). Diffusion of innovations in service organizations: Systematic review and recommendations. *The Milbank Quarterly, 82*(4), 581-629.

Third hour: District perspectives on research use
Special guest: Laura Cooper, former Assistant Superintendent at Evanston Township High School District

Required:
- Booth, J. L., Cooper, L. A., Donovan, M. S., Huyghe, A., Koedinger, K., & Pare-Blagoev, E. J. (2015). Design-based research within the constraints of practice: AlgebraByExample. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 20*(1-2), 79-100.

Additional:
- Cooper, L. A. (2007). Why closing the research-practice gap is critical to closing the student achievement gaps. *Theory into Practice, 46*(4), 317-324.

- Tseng, V. (2012). *Partnerships: Shifting the dynamics between research and practice.* New York, NY: William T. Grant Foundation.

- Munoz, M. A. & Rodosky, R. J. (2015). School districts as partners in research efforts. *Phi Delta Kappan, 96*(5), 42-46.

- Penuel, W. P., Farrell, C. F., Allen, A-R., Toyama, Y, & Coburn, C. E. (under review). What research district leaders find useful.

Week 6: February 8, 2016 - Two communities and cultural exchange perspectives

- Caplan, N. (1979). The two-communities theory and knowledge utilization. *American Behavioral Scientist, 22,* 459-470.

- Newman, J., Cherney, A., & Head, B. W. (2015). Do policy makers use academic research? Reexamining the "Two Communities" theory of research utilization. *Public Administration Review.*

- Palinkas, L.A., Aarons, G.A., Chorpita, B.F., Hoagwood, K., Landsverk, J., & Weisz, J.R. (2009). Cultural exchange and the implementation of evidence-based practices: Two case studies. *Research on Social Work Practice.*

Third hour: Research Alliances
Special guest: Ruth Lopez Turley, Houston Education Research Consortium

Required:
- Lopez Turley, R. & Stevens, C. (2015). Lessons from a school district-university partnership: The Houston Education Research Consortium. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 37*(1S), 6S-15S.

Additional:
- Roderick, M., & Easton, J. Q. (2007). *Developing new roles for research in new policy environments: the Consortium on Chicago School Research.* Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

- Allensworth, E. (2015). The use of ninth-grade early warning indicators to improve Chicago schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 18*(1-2), 68-83.

- Nelson, I. A., London, R. A., & Strobel, K. R. (2015). Reinventing the role of the university researcher. *Educational Researcher, 44*(1), 17-26.

Week 7: February 15 - Sensemaking and learning

- Coburn, C. E., Toure, J., & Yamashita, M. (2009). Evidence, interpretation, and persuasion: Instructional decision making at the district central office. *Teachers College Record, 111*(4), 1115-1161.

- Honig, M. I., Venkateswaran, N., McNeil, P., & Twitchell, J. M. (2014). Leaders' use of research for fundamental change in school district central offices: Processes and challenges. In K. S. Finnigan & A. J. Daly (Eds.), *Using research evidence in education: From the schoolhouse door to Capitol Hill* (pp. 33-52). New York, NY: Springer.

- Farrell, C. C. & Coburn, C. E. (under review). School districts and their external partners: A conceptual framework for productive partnering.

Third hour: Design-based research partnerships
Special guest: Paul Cobb

Required:
- Cobb, P., Jackson, K., Smith, T., Sorum, M., & Henrick, E. (2013). Design research with educational systems: Investigating and supporting improvement in the quality of mathematics teaching and learning at scale. *Teachers College Record, 112(*2), 320-349.

Additional:
- Cobb, P. & Jackson, K. (2011). Towards an empirically grounded theory of action for improving the quality of mathematics teaching at scale. *Mathematics Teacher Education and Development, 13*(1), 6-33.

- D'Amico, L. (2010). The center for learning technologies: Evolving relationships in design-based research. In C. E. Coburn & M. K. Stein (Eds.), *Research and practice in education: Building alliances, bridging the divide* (pp. 37-53). New York: NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Anderson, T., & Shattuck, J. (2012). Design-based research: A decade of progress in education research? *Educational Researcher, 41*(1), 16-25.

- Penuel, W. R., Fishman, B. J., Cheng, B. H., & Sabelli, N. (2011). Organizing research and development at the intersection of learning, impementation, and design. *Educational Researcher, 40*(7), 331-337.

Week 8, February 22, 2016 – Policy networks

- Kingdon, J. W. (1994). The policy primeval soup (pp. 116-144). In *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*. Boston: Little Brown and Company.

- McDonnell, L. & Weatherford, S. (2013). Evidence use and Common Core State Standards Movement: From problem definition to policy adoption. *American Journal of Education, 120*(1), 1-25.

- Finnigan, K. S., Daly, A. J., & Che, J. (2013). Systemwide reform in districts under pressure: The role of social networks in defining, acquiring, using, and diffusing research evidence. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *51*(4), 476-497.

Third hour: Reinvisioning linking agents: The Regional Education labs
Special Guest: Chris Mazzeo, Regional Education Lab Northwestern

Required:
- TBD article from guest

Additional:
- Whitehurst, G. (2010). *From research to practice: The future of Regional Education Labs.* http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2010/01/rels-whitehurst

- Carlson, E., Bitterman, A., Zhang, X., Gutmann, B., Wills, K., & Sinclair, B. (2013). *Evaluation of the Regional Educational Laboratories: Interim Report.* Institute of Educational Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.
  - Introduction (pp. 1-8)
  - Chapter 7 (pp. 58-68)

Week 9: February 29 - The role of ideas

- Smith, K. (2013). *Beyond evidence-based policy in public health: The interplay of ideas.* London, UK: Palgrave.
  - Chapter 2: Evidence-informed policy in public health
  - Chapter 3: The power of ideas (over evidence)

- Schneider, J. (2014). *From the ivory tower to the schoolhouse: How scholarship becomes common knowledge in education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
  - Chapter 1: "I have heard the phrase quite a bit:" Bloom's Taxonomy
  - Chapter 2: Theory of many uses: Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences

Third hour: Network Improvement Communities
Special guest: Sandra Park, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Required:

- Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L.M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better.* Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.
  - Introduction: A Better Way (pp. 1-20)
  - Chapter 5: Use disciplined inquiry to drive improvement (pp. 113-140)

Additional:
- o Bryk et al., Chapter 6: Accelerate learning through networked communities (pp. 141-170)

- Hannan, M., Russell, J. L., Takahashi, S., & Park, S. (2015). Using improvement science to better support beginning teachers: The case of the Building a Teaching Effectiveness Network. *Journal of Teacher Education, 66*(5), 494-508.

- Dolle, J. R., Gomez, L. M., Russell, J. L., & Bryk, A. S. (2013). More than a network: Building professional communities for educational improvement. *National Society for the Study of Education, 112*(2), 443-463.

Week 10: March 7 – Power and politics

- Scott, J., Lubienski, C., DeBray, E., & Jabbar, H. (2014). The intermediary function in evidence production, promotion, and mobilization: The case of educational incentives. In K.S. Finnigan & A.J. Daly (Eds.), *Using Research Evidence in Education: From the Schoolhouse Door to Capitol Hill* (pp. 69-89). Heidelberg: Springer.

- Brown, C. (2014). The policy agora: Why power inequalities affect the interaction between rearchers and policy makers. *Evidence & Policy, 10*(3), 421-438.

- Denzin, N. K. (2009). The elephant in the living room: or extending the conversation about the politics of evidence. *Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 139-160.

First hour: Participatory research [note: Ben will joins us from 2-3 CST]
Special guest: Ben Kirschner, University of Colorado, Boulder

Required:
- Kirshner, B. (2010). Productive tensions in youth participatory action research. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, *109*(1), 238-251.

Additional:
- Cousins, J. B., & Earl, L. M. (1992). The case for participatory evaluation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *14*(4), 397-418.

- Torre, M. E. (2009). Participatory action research and critical race theory: Fueling spaces for nos-otras to research. *The Urban Review*, *41*(1), 106-120.

- Wallerstein, N., & Duran, B. (2010). Community-based participatory research contributions to intervention research: the intersection of science and practice to improve health equity. *American Journal of Public Health*, *100*(S1), S40-S46.