
18. ‘Learning how to learn’: Teaching policy analysis from the perspective of the ‘new policy sciences’

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INTRODUCTION

When we teach public policy we focus on both what to learn and how to learn. Ideally, we want to support students to not just memorize information but to become adaptable lifelong learners and reflexive practitioners. ‘Learning how to learn’ involves developing greater knowledge of public policy by developing analytical skills that can be used to understand and use knowledge. Such learning can relate to the ‘basic science’ of public policy or to the ‘applied science’ of policy analysis. In the former, we focus on using policy models, concepts, theories, and frameworks to understand policymaking dynamics, from the actions of individual policymakers to the overall patterns of policymaking in complex systems. In the latter, we apply our knowledge of the policy process to identify a policy problem and possible solutions, generally with a particular policy-facing audience in mind. Moreover, when it comes to helping students develop policy problem-solving skills, an ideal world would be one with a high degree of overlap between scientific policy research and practical policy analysis. Instead, however, students often learn quickly that there is a gap between theory-driven studies of the policy process and more hands-on analysis of how people should act within that process to identify problems and solutions.

As a result, theory-informed policy process teaching is often (but not always) taught separately from practically oriented policy analysis. Consequently, this chapter seeks to highlight the distinct value of bringing both of these orientations back to bear on each other. Specifically, the ‘new policy sciences’ – a recent effort to reintegrate policy theory and policy analysis (cf. Cairney and Weible, 2017) – offer opportunities to rethink what and how we teach. Drawing inspiration from this approach, one aim of this chapter is therefore to support a teaching practice that, in addition to helping students learn the practical ‘nuts and bolts’ of how to ‘do’ policy analysis, fosters a wider understanding of policy processes and a critical capacity to reflect on the politics of policymaking in order to intervene in it more effectively. We argue that teaching students theoretical and conceptual insights from the policy sciences, and supporting them to then reflect on the implications they have for policy analysis allows them to strengthen their ability to develop problem-solving knowledge that stands the test of a range of relevant criteria including technical and political feasibility and more normative dimensions of desirability. We believe that the main advantage to this approach, compared to teaching approaches that only focus on the practical ‘how to’ of analysis, is that a theory-informed approach can produce students able to make and present pragmatic recommendations (i.e., recommendations not untethered from reality) and who are able to explain or anticipate what costs and trade-offs are involved and what might go wrong. The aim is not to make students

give up on presenting anything but tentative and modest recommendations. Rather, it is to encourage them to engage in ambitious policy analysis with their eyes open.

Our reflections derive from our plural experience of teaching policy analysis. Both of us have experience of teaching policy analysis to social science university students across different levels (undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD) and backgrounds (our students typically study for single or joint degrees in politics/political science, history, sociology, communications/public relations, marketing, etc.). We also have experience of teaching short policy analysis courses to practitioners without prior formal training in policy studies but whose jobs bring them to work on policy-related or policy-facing issues. We have primarily taught in European countries, including the devolved UK, France, and Denmark. One other thing we have in common, however, is that neither of us has ever been responsible for delivering an entire program of study dedicated to policy analysis as those that might exist, in particular, in North American ‘policy schools’. Instead, most of our policy analysis teaching (especially with respect to our university-based practice) is embedded into a wider public policy curriculum. Our courses generally have titles like ‘Comparative Public Policy’, ‘Policymaking in the United Kingdom’, or ‘The Politics of Policymaking’, to name a few, through which we weave and embed policy analysis content and skills acquisition. Some of the arguments we make therefore reflect the audiences, programs, and regions that have defined our practice to date. We nevertheless believe that our general enjoinder to (1) problematize policy analysis as a (set of) practice(s), (2) find ways to overcome the false duality between policy theory and practice, and (3) develop curricula that support students to ‘learn how to learn’, may be helpful to anybody wishing to develop a more reflexive policy analysis teaching practice.

The chapter subsequently unfolds in three parts to reflect these objectives. First, it historicizes policy analysis – and policy analysis teaching – as a practice, illuminating the origins and strong legacies that shape teaching and learning experiences and expectations in this area, against and among which teachers are always positioning themselves. It supports practitioners to reflect on the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of teaching policy analysis, before thirdly setting out some practical suggestions on ‘how’ we might improve pedagogical practice in this area.

WHAT IS POLICY ANALYSIS?

What ‘policy analysis’ means is less intuitive than one might think, even among public policy scholars. For some, policy analysis refers to any form of study – from theory-informed empirical policy research to practically oriented policy problem-solving – that simply involves analyzing (that is studying in some detail) any aspect of policy. Some academic policy researchers therefore refer to everything that they do as ‘policy analysis’. More than just the expression of individual interpretations of what ‘analysis’ means and refers to, the disciplinary use of the term ‘policy analysis’ also reflects regional and linguistic patterns (see Part VI of this volume). For example, ‘public policy studies’ has historically been translated as *‘analyse des politiques publiques’* in French (literally ‘public policy analysis’). By contrast, a sharper distinction between the two terms tends to be operated in North America, where a stronger division of labour exists between policy ‘schools’ dedicated to training policy analysts, and the training of academic policy researchers, usually within social science departments – chiefly political science ones.

We nevertheless believe it is useful to conceptually distinguish policy analysis from other kinds of policy research, even when talking about practices belonging to regions or traditions where the disciplinary vocabulary does not recognize this distinction, and even if – as we argue later in the chapter – the boundaries between the two often quickly dissipate in practice. Indeed, contrasting ‘policy analysis’ from something else that we might call ‘(theory informed) policy research’ is useful primarily because it allows us to describe a range of practices and their underpinning motivations, beliefs, and assumption that, no matter how analogous or compatible they appear, have historically developed quite independently from one another (see Chapter 1 in this volume). Consequently, in this chapter, when we refer to policy analysis, we refer to ‘the identification of a policy problem and possible solutions’ (Cairney, 2021: 3). This definition implicitly contrasts policy analysis to other possible forms of process-oriented policy research that may not be directed towards applied policy problem-solving.

Considered this way, the teaching of policy analysis can appear relatively straightforward: there is now a large number of texts that provide ways to make policy analysis systematic (e.g., Mintrom, 2012; Weimer and Vining, 2017; Dunn, 2018; Meltzer and Schwartz, 2019; Bardach and Patashnik, 2020), and one way to approach teaching is to simply pick one of these guides (or synthesize the lessons from several) and instruct students on how to carry out the prescribed procedures. Broadly, all these texts present policy analysis as having three main aims: (1) to identify and define a problem, (2) link this problem to feasible solutions in (3) a persuasive manner. Teaching policy analysis in this way therefore involves supporting students to learn and refine a number of analytical, synthesizing, and communication skills. Analysis and synthesis skills required to carry out policy analysis include: problem identification and definition; selection of appropriate evidence on the problem and possible solutions; selection of appropriate evaluation criteria to assess alternatives across at least two dimensions, namely technical feasibility and political acceptability; and extrapolation from evidence to predict likely outcomes of alternatives. Communication and rhetorical techniques required concern the ability to be concise and compelling in the presentation of this information, and to be able to tailor this to a range of written and oral formats (e.g., policy briefs, blog posts, and presentations) for different audiences (e.g., civil servants, MPs, ministers, etc.).

However, stopping at this skills-based approach to teaching and learning policy analysis is problematic and short-sighted (e.g., Fukuyama, 2018). There are major gaps or trade-offs in the ways that typical ‘how to’ texts explain policy analysis (Cairney, 2021), with knock-on implications for how we teach it. Two challenges stand out in particular. Firstly, many practical guides present the goal of policy analysis as relatively singular and coherent: identify a problem and communicate a simple story about how to solve it to actors with the power to do something about it. However, if we place this representation in broader context in the classroom by, for example, putting the contents of these guides in dialogue with other bodies of scholarship in public policy, political science, and other related social science disciplines, this illusion of simplicity quickly disappears. Instead, policy analysis appears to refer to a broad collection of practices, with different and at times competing objectives, taking place in a policy process that is inherently political and contested, and involves a dizzying plurality of actors. Furthermore, students can be supported to concretely grasp the fuzzy and changeable boundaries of policy analysis as a concrete practice by being introduced to studies of policy analysts (e.g., Radin, 2019; Brans, Geva-May, and Howlett, 2017; Thissen and Walker, 2013; Geva-May, 2005; Kohoutek, Nekola, and Veselý, 2018). These studies provide empirical evidence suggesting that, as a professional practice, policy analysis has changed over time, takes

different forms across different sectors and geographical regions, and has grown as a sector to include new professional configurations and standards. Moreover, while some guides hint at the importance of understanding policy process theories, they do not provide sufficient acknowledgement of the implications of these insights to policy analysis. Put simply, it is customary to describe policy analysis as a fairly rational and technical exercise, through a series of steps, even if the authors highlight some time pressures, political constraints, and the need to treat clients as the main audience. These constraints tend to relate to the ability to complete your own work, rather than the constraints in policymaking systems that, for all intents and purposes, place severe limits on the ways in which anyone will seek to understand problems, and the technical and political feasibility of proposed solutions.

Secondly, existing policy analysis handbooks do not explain fully how to learn and combine research methods. Some texts spend a great deal of time explaining economics so that students can perform cost-benefit analysis. Some focus primarily on communication skills. Others suggest that policy analysts learn on the job, and ‘hustle’ data in a short space of time. Ultimately, policy analysis is a versatile practice that requires versatile students. If, indeed, policy analysis is more ‘art and craft’ (Wildavsky, 1980) than the application of a manageable finite number of concrete methods (like cost-benefit analysis), then the focus of teaching also needs to shift from ‘only’ introducing students to these methods to actively equipping them with skills that will serve them long after they have left the classroom. These skills include adaptability, reflectivity, and the capacity to learn autonomously in complex and changeable contexts. Teaching policy analysis effectively therefore also requires acknowledging that no single research method or approach may be sufficient to provide answers to all the questions that students may be confronted with. Consequently, it is more effective to support students to become methodologically and functionally adaptable.

RECONCILING A (FALSE?) DUALITY

How has the technical-rational approach to policy analysis come to dominate public policy teaching? The existence of a ‘policy analysis’ that is distinct from other types of policy-relevant inquiry, and which can be taught by means of ‘how to’ instructional guides speaks directly to the duality supposedly at the heart of the field of public policy. We have a large disciplinary vocabulary to talk about this duality, one which sets up the idea of there being ‘two worlds’ of policy-focused knowledge production which contrasts policy theory with policy practice, and positions policy either as object or activity (Ranney, 1968; Sabatier, 1992). This dichotomous ‘two worlds’ perspective is an intellectual legacy of the way we organized public policy as a field of inquiry and human activity, largely as a result of the interpretation and operationalization of principles associated with ‘policy sciences’. Its main architect, Harold Lasswell, originally envisaged the policy sciences as a manner to (1) combine science and practice in a way to (2) systematize and optimize the way we made and implemented public policy (Lasswell, 1970, 1971). While Lasswell called for greater integration of what he saw as knowledge *of* policy (i.e., process knowledge) and knowledge *in* policy (i.e., policy analysis and evaluation), two largely separate tracks of professionalized policy-relevant research became institutionalized – one taking place within universities and which did not always have practical applications, and one taking place within public agencies, think tanks, and private consultancies, which very rarely drew on academic theories and concepts of the policy process.

Over the last twenty years, the dominance of this dichotomous 'two worlds' perspective has been gradually eroded. Functionally, the boundaries between those who 'think about' and those who 'do' policy have become more porous. A great deal of policy learning and skills development has been brought 'in house' to universities, through the mainstreaming of public policy courses in, for example, political science, economics, and management – increasing students' exposure to policy theories and concepts. Moreover, if having a clearly identifiable 'client' who sets the questions and to whom advice is directed was considered the distinguishing feature between policy analysts and policy researchers (e.g., Behn, 1985; Weimer and Vining, 2017; Meltzer, 2013), this distinction has fallen away. Indeed, the advent of the 'impact agenda' in academic knowledge production has incentivized academic policy researchers to 'translate' their work for policy practitioners and, in so doing, grapple with questions of relevance and practical applicability (Cairney and Oliver, 2020; Weible and Cairney, 2021). Conceptually, the very basis of this dichotomy has been called into question with the ascendancy of critical policy analysis. Here, older rational-instrumental conceptions of policy analysis are cast out in favour of those that foreground the inherently political nature of policymaking.

In fact, to the extent that we (1) often rely on rational-technical 'how to' guides, and (2) divorce policy analysis teaching from that of policy theories and concepts, this area remains one of the last bastions of this limiting 'two worlds' narrative. Overcoming the exaggerated duality between policy theory and practical policy analysis in our teaching would therefore offer new opportunities for supporting students to develop not just applied problem-solving skills, but also the sort of intellectual and practical agility to support lifelong policy-relevant learning of the sort required long after they leave the classroom. To help students grasp policy analysis, let alone grapple with how to carry it out proficiently, we should therefore embrace a teaching practice that problematizes policy analysis and contextualizes it in a manner that foregrounds its historical, intellectual, and professional heritage. This means, in particular, drawing out the practical and normative assumptions that underlie dominant conceptions of policy analysis. Indeed, conceptions of policy analysis as the production, synthesis, and assessment of information with a view to identifying and solving a problem problematically elides the possibility there does not exist a single problem or solution. Instead, we may be faced with a perpetual process of interpretation, negotiation, and ranking of preferences based on more than just rationality.

One disciplinary 'anchor' for contextualizing policy analysis in our teaching can be found in the form of the 'new policy sciences'. It highlights how policy theory and policy analysis might fruitfully cross-fertilize (Cairney and Weible, 2017; Cairney, 2021; Weible, Cairney, and Yordy, 2022). Theoretical insights into how policy actors think and make decisions (e.g., bounded rationality), about how policy action unfolds in complex systems, or about how and why policies change (or do not), are immediately germane for those seeking to advance actionable insights. Our teaching practices can therefore aim to foster integrated (i.e., theory-informed) approaches to policy analysis that attempt to teach students to understand politics, understand complexity, but also understand strategies to manage the challenges these raise. This requires an integration of knowledge of and in the process. In particular, this would involve developing policy analysis curricula that better take up cutting-edge knowledge on human decision-making and complex systems and actively engage with theories of the policy process. This also requires supporting students to reflect on the politics that underpin the very objectives of policy analysis in the first place. This includes, for example, bridging the scholar-

ship on evidence-based policy and policy analysis to highlight how science does not ‘speak for itself’ in decision-making processes (cf. Smith in this volume). It might also involve fostering reflection on what policy analysts can or ought to do. For instance, helping decision-makers learn and manage may frequently be more realistic and effective than telling them ‘what to do’, yet we often overlook these approaches to ‘practical policy problem solving’ in our teaching practice. Finally, using theory to help illuminate the different dimensions of the policy system (e.g., silos and timescales) that practitioners often need to actively grapple with can provide students with the necessary heuristics to tackle them themselves – no matter what shape they take – in their later professional practice.

An integrated approach to teaching policy analysis would therefore explicitly recognize the complementarity between policy process knowledge, applied problem-solving skills, and a versatile ‘toolbox’ of research methods. Areas of overlap between them (see Table 18.1) reveal the implication each has for the other. For instance, core concepts like ‘bounded rationality’ are not just useful for theorizing decision-maker behaviour in policy research, but also have significance for the communication of policy-relevant information in policy analysis. Similarly, analytical notions of ‘feasibility’ have concrete implications for methods/research design, for example when it comes to selecting cases in prospective policy learning and transfer studies. Indeed, the cases from which policymakers wish to learn tend not to be derived from an objectively set ‘universe of cases’ (e.g., Cairney, St.Denny, and Kippin, 2021). Instead, dimensions of technical and political feasibility speak more closely to policymakers’ pragmatically/heuristically-derived case selection approach. The body of policy research knowledge on (the limits of) evidence-based policymaking has consequences for the practice of policy-relevant research. It complexifies how we think about policy timescales, the importance and prevalence of networks in deciding and making policy, and the logic of gradual ‘enlightenment’ (e.g., Weiss, 1977) that underpins policy development in many sectors.

Critical policy analysis (CPA) can also be brought in to help students grasp the inherently political nature of policymaking. CPA broadly identifies the power imbalances present in policy analysis and policymaking that result in or exacerbate social disparities, and compels scholars to recognize and support those who are harmed or marginalized and more generally incorporate emancipation into their research (Bacchi, 2009: 44). The notion that policy analysis might or should be a rationalist endeavour is contested by CPA researchers. They challenge the representation of policy analysis as the disinterested use of objective and neutral analytical techniques with a view to generating technical and apolitical advice. Instead, they argue that the projection of putative objectivity by analysts actively contributes to the ongoing marginalization and subordination of certain groups. These insights matter for teaching policy analysis, since they speak to hierarchies of knowledge, and dominant norms and beliefs concerning target groups or the ‘nature’ of problems and solutions that policy analysts can only mindfully choose to reproduce or challenge if they are aware of them. Who should participate in informing policy analysis why, and how, can therefore look very different to the classical model if critical perspectives are brought in.

Weaving these insights into our teaching allows us to demonstrate how policy analysis is more than the quick production of bounded problem-solving knowledge and can also be a tool in the ‘long game’ of policy. Moreover, adopting this perspective allows us to rethink the different constituencies or audiences we teach and, in the process, broadens the relevance of policy analysis teaching. Theoretical and conceptual insights from policy process studies belong in policy analysis courses just as much as the skills associated with ‘thinking like

Table 18.1 Areas of overlap

	'Basic' science	Key overlaps	'Applied' science
Substantive knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the policy process? • How can we identify and measure policy change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is policy? How should we study it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the policy problem? • What policy solutions are technically and politically feasible?
Conceptual and analytical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical analysis. Micro, macro, meso levels of analytical abstraction • Frameworks, theories, concepts, and models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual and empirical analysis • How useful is e.g., the 'policy cycle' to (1) understand the policy process, and (2) engage in the policy process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Problem definition/formulation, implementation, and evaluation
Research skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using research methods to produce new knowledge of the policy process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combining research methods – quantitative and qualitative methods, modelling, social networks analysis, ethnography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using research methods to generate knowledge of a policy problem and calculate the likely success of solutions

a policy analyst' (cf. Geva-May, 2005) belong in general public policy courses. Understanding the policy process is key to influencing it (Weible et al., 2012) – a goal common to many students of public policy, not just those inhabiting specialized policy analysis schools or programs, as well as to academic policy researchers. The next section therefore sets out some suggestions approaching the design of policy analysis teaching for a broad range of different student groups in a way that integrates theory with conceptual, analytical, and methodological skills.

CRAFTING RESPONSIVE POLICY ANALYSIS TEACHING

Ultimately, what an integrated approach to teaching policy analysis looks like in practice is a fruitfully open question. This is because how you teach depends a lot on who you teach (Cairney, 2023). When it comes to teaching policy analysis, who we teach (and how they ended up in our classroom) varies. It includes:

- Students at different levels (BA, MA, and PhD)
- Generalists (e.g., BA and MA students undertaking broader social science programs) or specialists (MA and PhD students in dedicated public policy programs, including those in 'policy schools')
- Those with and without professional experience (e.g., professionals undertaking part-time specialization courses for career progression)
- Those from different parts of the world (and therefore operating in different policy contexts and teaching traditions).

In keeping with the plurality of our students, how we organize our policy analysis curricula can also vary greatly. We can plot different approaches across a notional spectrum from minimalist to maximalist. Minimally, policy analysis may represent a single session of a general introductory course in public policy/administration/management. Medially, it may represent, for example, a stand-alone course taken by students in broader policy-relevant social science

degrees. Finally, at the maximal end of the spectrum, we find entire ‘integrated’ client-oriented policy analysis programs which feature a combination of live and simulated application of policy analysis skills for ‘real’ or imaginary clients over a longer period of time (i.e., over more than one semester) (Meltzer, 2013). Typically, these are dedicated graduate programs which merge topical (i.e., substantive) courses on specific issues, topics, or sectors, with policy analysis components built into individual courses and integrated into other modules in a way that emphasizes the repeated application of theoretical knowledge to practical cases in order to hone skills over time. The client-orientation of the program is supposed to act as a ‘bridge’ between classroom and workplace by intensively developing transferable professional skills necessary to undertake policy analysis ‘in the real world’ (i.e., in client-driven, time and resource-constrained environments) (Allard and Straussman, 2003).

In light of this diversity, we propose teaching strategies to overcome what we believe to be two of the central challenges faced by policy analysis teachers no matter their audience: developing an appropriate curriculum and activating learners. We finish the section by zooming in on a discussion of how to apply elements of these strategies in designing the teaching and assessment of policy writing exercises. Overall, the insights below are generally applicable to any format but do not represent the full range of considerations involved in designing policy analysis curricula (especially over the course of entire programs, which necessarily involve considering questions of teaching team management, logistics, and program-level coherence much more so than for smaller courses or self-contained sessions). Moreover, these strategies are based on general principles that need to be translated to meet the specific needs of each cohort and course. Cross-referencing these principles with insights from this *Handbook*’s chapters on teaching public policy to different audiences (Part V of this volume) and teaching public policy in different geographical regions (Part VI of this volume) may therefore be useful for contextualizing and rendering them operationally appropriate to meet different needs.

Developing a Reflective Practice to Guide Curriculum Development

Teaching policy analysis from a perspective that actively integrates theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and practical insights requires a curriculum that is up to the task. Here, we understand curricular development to be the design of sequenced experiences that allow students to gain knowledge, practice skills, and ultimately achieve proficiency across the learning objectives. The key, when designing such a program of work, is centering a dual emphasis on the ‘what’ of policy and the ‘how’ of analysis. This might seem simple but it rarely is, principally because a single teacher is unlikely to have equal knowledge or mastery of all of the substantive and practical knowledge that might be useful to convey to those wishing to learn policy analysis. In light of this, it is important to take stock of the tools and resources at your disposal. This means, in particular, being actively mindful of where the contours of your experience, skills, and knowledge lay. For instance, those who teach policy analysis are not necessarily the same as those who consider themselves professional policy analysts. It may nevertheless often be the case that those of us who come from a policy research background have punctually carried out the tasks associated with policy analysis, for example in the context of our own engagement, impact, or consultancy work. Similarly, we may not all be equally equipped to teach the myriad research methods amenable to policy analysis work.

Teaching policy analysis therefore requires us to reckon with who we are and what we know (and what we do not know). Identifying gaps in our own ‘toolbox’ provides an opportunity to

then survey what other resources we might consider bringing into our practice. Typically, this can take the form of collaborative working, which allows for multiple perspectives to inform the session, course, or program. Co- or team-teaching, for example, can allow us to draw on colleagues' expertise and securely cover more substantive, methodological, theoretical, or practical ground. Alternatively, we can invite external guests to come and speak to students about, for example, their experience of practice. Collaboration can be in person, but new modes of online teaching may also offer opportunities to bring in expertise, including from further away. Moreover, even in cases where formal collaboration is out of reach and we teach alone, continually taking stock of our own experience may help us draw out elements that are germane to policy analysis teaching. For instance, neither author of this chapter has ever held a formal position as a policy analyst – we both come from academic backgrounds where theory-informed policy research constitutes the majority of our work – but we both have quite a lot of experience of doing tasks that are either analogous to or comfortably fall within the realm of policy analysis. For instance, we have been tasked by government actors to research an issue and report back with suggestions, and we have presented policy-relevant information in a range of formats to different policy audiences. Our experiences are therefore frequently brought into our teaching as supplementary examples or illustrations.

Using reflective practice to inform the development and delivery of our teaching is therefore a continual exercise in mapping. We must map our own self – our knowledge, experiences, but also our blind spots – but we must also in tandem map out the learning objectives we want our students to reach. This requires casting a wide net and considering whether skills or knowledge the discipline has not traditionally associated with policy analysis may nevertheless benefit our students. Ultimately, policy analysis is one of many forms of 'policy work'. Policy work refers to all the activities that 'those professionally engaged in policy actually do' (Colebatch, Hoppe, and Noordegraaf, 2010: 239). As policy workers, policy analysts carry out a wide range of activities (Radin, 2000; Colebatch, 2006; Colebatch and Radin, 2006; Kohoutek, Nekola, and Veselý, 2018), many of which do not fit the ideal of the classical 'five-step' approach to policy analysis (Hird, 2017). This is primarily because – rather than in spite of – this work's client-orientation: the clients of policy analysis are plural, their needs are diverse, and the questions they ask are often better answered using different approaches. Relying too heavily on the 'classical' approach therefore under-serves our students not only in terms of skills development but also in terms of helping them develop a realistic sense of professional identity and value (cf. Radin, 2000: 183). This may increasingly be the case if we consider that public service is not our students' only professional destination, and that many may end up working in the private or not-for-profit sector, both of which feature a high demand for policy analysis skills (see Laforest and Smith in this volume). Our teaching goals should therefore be competence-based, that is to say centered on employability, skill versatility, and the ability to generate impactful policy analysis (i.e., that is likely to be used), rather than only on the ability to mechanically and faithfully (re)produce 'classical' policy analysis. This is especially so when approaching policy analysis teaching outside of the distinctive North American context from which this particular model was derived (e.g., Kohoutek, Nekola, and Veselý, 2018: 266. See also He, Lai, and Wu, 2016).

Consequently, in addition to fostering analytical and synthesis skills, we must also critically attend to the full range of additional aptitudes that might inform or enhance policy analysis work (see, for example, Dryzek, 2008; Forester, 2008; Wilson, 2008; Winship, 2008). Being methodologically proficient, for example, matters. Policy analysis requires data collection

skills: information needs to be collected before it can be organized and assessed. There is no *a priori* and finite list of data collection skills a student needs to learn in order to become an effective policy analyst. Instead, just as we teach social science students more generally, the questions they seek to answer will tend to guide both the way the research is designed and how it is carried out. Nevertheless, many useful data collection skills, such as effective interviewing, remain underappreciated in policy analysis teaching – particularly that which considers cost-benefit analysis to be a ‘Golden Hammer’, that is to say a tool notionally capable of being used in all cases. What we can and should teach students in the context of policy analysis is neither disciplinarily settled nor temporally fixed. Indeed, as technology and research practices evolve, so too do the opportunities and norms concerning what constitutes useful or valuable policy-relevant information. For example, policymakers’ increasing interests in the uses of big data and machine learning may influence the skills we wish to support our students in acquiring. It may be that we ourselves, as teachers of public policy, are brought to teach these data collection methods. In many cases, however, robust and pluralist training in methods and research design is carried out in other courses dedicated to them. Here, a key strategy is therefore to ensure program-level curriculum coherence so that the skills our students are learning in other courses can be capitalized on in a way that allows us to support them as they learn to apply these methods to policy analytic tasks.

Activating the Learner

No matter how ‘practical’ it is presented to be, even the most classical approaches to policy analysis involve abstraction, regardless of whether this abstraction is explicitly indexed on policy theories and concepts. Indeed, every step of classical policy analysis is abstract until rendered tangible through application. Employing insights from policy studies therefore does not needlessly ‘complicate’ otherwise ‘straightforward’ policy analysis. Rather, it affords us the opportunity to better surface and describe the logics that underpin different aspects of policymaking and, therefore, of policy analysis. Furthermore, adding policy theories and concepts to the policy analysis curriculum does have to involve layering an entire ‘introduction to policy studies’ course, accompanied by a thousand-page syllabus, on top of a practically-oriented policy analysis curriculum. To produce succinct and engaging summaries of the most important policy studies, innovations in teaching resources, such as blog posts, podcasts, and vlogs, can all be utilized (e.g., Cairney, 2023). Of course, teachers can develop their own versions of these resources, but there already exists a wealth of excellent content that can be drawn on.

Ultimately, however, teaching policy analysis from a purely theoretical perspective is never fully adequate. This is because policy analysis, with its practical and client-oriented nature, calls for the development of abilities that are primarily acquired through the consistent material application of knowledge. Teaching policy analysis must therefore incorporate practical components. The whole range of learning, knowledge consolidation, skill development, and assessment methodologies should be taken into account while choosing or designing these components. In this context, it might be helpful to reframe what we consider ‘innovation’ to be: teaching policy analysis in novel and exciting ways that better reflect the issues facing policymaking today may require coming up with new strategies and activities, but it may also require reevaluating some of the traditional tools we have available to us in order to realize their full potential. More than we already tend to do, it is possible to ‘unpack’ the various learning objectives supported by certain teaching and assessment activities that we frequently

employ, or 'repackage' these with additional elements to increase the learning impact. Subsequently, the rest of this section is dedicated to describing how we operationalize these guidelines in the planning and execution of a 'portfolio' policy analysis project.

All of our courses comprise some element of policy analysis teaching, which is reflected in the design of our formative and summative assessment. Rather than only requiring students to produce a piece of policy analysis, we also require them to communicate the information from this analysis in additional ways for different audiences, as well as to produce theory-informed reflective accounts of why they designed and carried out their analysis the way they did. Typically, this means assigning a series of assignments comprising some or all of the following (see for example Cairney, 2021: 'Annex A'):

- A policy brief or policy analysis paper: Students identify a policy problem and a client and produce a paper that carries out all of the tasks typically associated with this form of work:¹ define the problem, identify possible solutions, determine suitable criteria with which to adjudicate between different alternatives, and put forward a clear recommendation that takes into account both technical and political feasibility. The paper is kept short (around 1,000 to 1,500 words) to force students to deliver information concisely to a client who is presumed to be short on time and attention. This exercise also requires students to prepare an annotated bibliography: a short list of key texts, accompanied with a short summary (usually in bullet point format), that their client can consult should they want to gain a rapid but comprehensive overview of existing knowledge on the issue.
- A theory-informed reflection: Students are asked to prepare a short (approx. 1,000 word) narrative that demonstrates how their understanding of policy theories and concepts informed their policy analysis. For instance, they can use bounded rationality to think about how policymakers will process the information and complexity to think about who the audience is, when and why they might act, and what the likely repercussions are. The reflection offers them the opportunity to explain how they used concepts and theories to make the decisions that underpin their paper, for example in terms of prioritizing types of evidence, or selecting cases from which to 'learn' or propose policy transfers, or assessing and communicating the issue of political feasibility to their audience.
- A blog post: Students are then asked to 'translate' their policy analysis into a short (500 word) blog post aimed at a broad, interested but non-expert audience. The goal is to provide a succinct and direct description of the issue (together with any potential remedies) in a way that dispenses with jargon and highly technical information. Conceptual insights should be used to guide the work but without appearing in the text. Care should be taken with communication, to anticipate the challenges associated with the high competition for readers' attention that operates on social media.
- A short oral presentation: Students are tasked with once more translating the content of their policy paper into a different format, this time a short (approx. three minute) oral briefing to the class, followed by questions from the audience. The exercise is useful to reveal to students the challenges involved in (1) delivering a full case (problem and solu-

¹ There are many good resources for teachers looking to teach policy writing or design policy writing exercises. We suggest, in particular: Boys and Keating, 2009; Chagas-Bastos and Burges, 2019; Druliolle, 2017; Judge, 2021; Pennock, 2011; Smith, 2019; Trueb, 2013; Wilcoxon, 2018; and Wiley, 1991.

tion) in a short amount of time in a context where (2) audience attention has to be actively managed, and (3) managing and fielding questions the nature of which can never be fully anticipated.

The ‘portfolio’ approach challenges students to create connections between theory and practice. While the policy analysis paper serves as the central component, layering on the additional elements increases the opportunity for students to practice various ways of expressing the same material by diversifying the forms they employ (shorter vs. longer, technical vs. lay, oral vs. written). Furthermore, by pushing students to defend their decisions and actions in light of policy insights rather than a policy analysis checklist, the reflection serves as a ‘bridge’ between theory and practice. Additionally, these elements can be altered in a variety of ways to emphasize or achieve certain learning objectives. Below are some common modifications of each of the elements:

- Policy brief or policy analysis paper: Common modifications we employ include: the length and structure of the paper (for instance by adding or removing a section dedicated to implementing and evaluating the recommended solution); whether the work is carried out individually or as part of a group; as well as the number of times students rework their piece (requiring students to submit their first attempt for peer review by classmates and then rework the piece, or rework the piece in light of feedback received after the oral presentation, is a useful way to help students gain skills associated with applying or acting on feedback).
- Theory-informed reflection: For students without a background in policy studies, we frequently alter this activity. For instance, when Emily assigns a policy brief to her ‘Gender and Politics’ course students – who have a generalist political science background rather than a background in public policy – they are encouraged to reflect on how feminist political science insights (for example on feminist expertise, e.g., Chappell and Mackay, 2020, in addition to those they have learned about public policy, were used to inform the design of their brief.
- Blog post: In addition to changing the blog post’s length, we occasionally alter the preparation requirements for the activity. For instance, before writing the article, we invite students to identify three policy-related blog entries that they can draw inspiration from and share them with their peers. Following a discussion of the articles’ advantages and disadvantages, the students come up with a set of standards for what they consider to be an effective policy-related blog post.
- Oral presentation: This exercise can be customized in a number of ways, including the duration of the presentation and the target audience (we can do the exercise as a ‘Brief your boss’ simulation or as a component of a group panel discussion with other students). We can also add another activity to the subsequent Q&A by asking the audience what they remember about the presentation and which parts they found most memorable or convincing. By doing this, we can learn who was paying attention to what and why, which may help us understand how communication and attention interact. If the presentation is converted into a podcast or vlog, digital proficiency may also come into play.

The overall goal of this ‘portfolio’ approach is threefold: (1) link policy theory and practice; (2) maximize the value of conventional activities (presentations, policy writing exercises, etc.); and (3) keep the learner actively engaged. A strong and engaging competence-based

teaching framework can be created by recognizing that all of the 'staple' activities of teaching policy analysis have something to offer in terms of both substantive knowledge and practical skills, and working to strengthen both those dimensions in our teaching practice. These can be further enhanced with new approaches, including structured reflections, to open up new possibilities for connecting the 'how' and the 'what' of policy analysis. Additionally, as our teaching methods continue to evolve, especially in relation to online and hybrid forms, so do our prospects for maximizing the effectiveness of our activation strategies. Although each format has its own difficulties and restrictions, most of us have more options now than ever when it comes to teaching. In particular, the internet provides opportunities to connect students with information, materials, and people from a wider range of locations than our historically localized teaching methods may have previously allowed us. If we want to ensure that a variety of viewpoints are used to guide our students' learning, this is crucial.

CONCLUSION

Teaching policy analysis in a way that accurately reflects and speaks to real-world policymaking contexts is important yet challenging. While learning what it means to engage in ethical and professional practice, students also need to learn a wide range of technical, methodological, and communication skills with which to identify and assess feasible alternatives to complex issues in time-constrained conditions. Traditionally, policy analysis has been taught separately from theory-informed policy research, and has tended to follow stepwise models that may not sufficiently account for the complexity and politics inherent to policymaking. Yet the insights from policy studies are highly germane to informing how we design and execute effective policy analysis – that is policy analysis that stands a chance of solving the puzzles it sets itself. Consequently, this chapter argues that those who teach policy analysis should consider developing approaches that combine what we know about how policy is made from studies of the policy process with teaching tailored to fostering adaptability and lifelong learning. Without necessarily shoehorning a comprehensive 'introduction to policy theory' into existing policy analysis programs, we propose a number of strategies for better integrating theory and practice. Firstly, historicizing and contextualizing policy analysis as a set of professional practices that are neither historically fixed nor regionally stable helps reveal its contingency to students. Secondly, developing a reflective pedagogical practice in order to 'map out' our own assumptions, skills, and blind spots is useful for then identifying what resources we have (or need to access) in order to deliver teaching that best meets the needs and interests of different types of students across a wide range of institutional and pedagogical settings. Thirdly and finally, with examples from our own practice, we discuss the value of competence-based approaches that focus on activating the learner and challenging them to actively index their decision-making on robust theoretical and conceptual insights into how policymakers think and behave.

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