Integrating Modes of Systems Thinking into Strategic Planning Education and Practice: The Thinking Persons Institute Approach
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Integrating Writing and Research Skills: Development and Testing of a Rubric to Measure Student Outcomes
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Sarah Ryan

NASPAA Gazette: People in Public Affairs
News and Opportunities

The Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE) is the flagship journal of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Founded in 1970, NASPAA serves as a national and international resource for the promotion of excellence in education for the public service. Its institutional membership includes more than 250 university programs in the United States in public administration, policy, and management. It accomplishes its purposes through direct services to its member institutions and by

- Developing and administering appropriate standards for educational programs in public affairs through its Executive Council and its Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation;
- Representing to governments and other institutions the objectives and needs of education for public affairs and administration;
- Encouraging curriculum development and innovation and providing a forum for publication and discussion of education scholarship, practices, and issues;
- Undertaking surveys that provide members and the public with information on key educational issues;
- Meeting with employers to promote internship and employment for students and graduates;
- Undertaking joint educational projects with practitioner professional organizations; and
- Collaborating with institutes and schools of public administration in other countries through conferences, consortia, and joint projects.

NASPAA provides opportunities for international engagement for NASPAA members, placing a global emphasis on educational quality and quality assurance through a series of networked international initiatives, in particular the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcc), the Inter-American Network of Public Administration Education (INPAE), and the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). It is also involved locally; for instance, directing the Small Communities Outreach Project for Environmental Issues, which networks public affairs schools and local governments around environmental regulation policy issues, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency.

NASPAA's twofold mission is to ensure excellence in education and training for public service and to promote the ideal of public service. Consistent with NASPAA's mission, JPAE is dedicated to advancing teaching and learning in public affairs, defined to include the fields of policy analysis, public administration, public management, and public policy. Published quarterly by NASPAA, the journal features commentaries, announcements, symposia, book reviews, and peer-reviewed scholarly articles on pedagogical, curricular, and accreditation issues pertaining to public affairs education.

JPAE was founded in 1995 by a consortium from the University of Kansas and the University of Akron and was originally published as the Journal of Public Administration Education. H. George Frederickson was the journal's founding editor. In addition to serving as NASPAA's journal of record, JPAE is affiliated with the Section of Public Administration Education of the American Society for Public Administration.
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Cover design by Mario A. Rivera
From the Editor

This issue of JPAE is fully devoted to articles involving creative and innovative pedagogy.

Two of the seven articles concern the use of conceptual maps in the classroom: “Intermediate Theory: The Missing Link in Successful Student Scholarship,” by Patricia Shields and Hassan Tajalli, in relation to capstone papers, and “Integrating Modes of Systems Thinking into Strategic Planning Education and Practice: The Thinking Persons Institute Approach,” by David Andersen, John Bryson, George P. Richardson, Fran Ackerman, Colin Eden, and Charles B. Finn, in relation to strategic management training.

Two articles concern the teaching of civic engagement and leadership skills. These are “Arguing Toward a More Active Citizenry: Re-envisioning the Introductory Civics Course Via Debate-Centered Pedagogy,” by Sarah Ryan, and “Leadership Theory and Practice in the MPA Curriculum: Reasons and Methods,” by Matthew Fairholm.

Finally, three focus on pedagogical methods. These are “Value Frameworks in the Policy Analysis Course: An Application Exercise,” by Francine Sanders Romero, “Teaching Courses on Managing Diversity: Using Learning Contracts to Address Challenges and Model Behavior,” by Nadia Rubaii-Barrett, and “Integrating Writing and Research Skills: Development and Testing of a Rubric to Measure Student Outcomes,” by Barbara Peat.

Among the threads connecting these various contributions are (1) a stress on expository and analytical writing quality, (2) an emphasis on modeling behaviors in the classroom, (3) a concern with complex value systems and their analysis, and (4) a commitment to the empirical measurement of student outcomes. These studies—all of exceptionally high quality—should be a useful resource to JPAE’s readers; they should also significantly contribute to pedagogical theory and practice in public affairs education.

The upcoming fall quarterly issue of JPAE will be organized around international themes, and the winter issue will be devoted to diversity and diversity planning. A significant increase in manuscript submissions, along with the ongoing development of several symposia, argues well for sustained quality in subsequent issues of the journal.

—Mario A. Rivera, Ph.D., Editor
Information for Contributors

The *Journal of Public Affairs Education* (*JPAE*) is dedicated to advancing teaching and learning in public affairs broadly defined, which includes the fields of policy analysis, public administration, public management, and public policy. *JPAE* pursues its mission by publishing high-quality theory, empirical research, and commentary. The core values of *JPAE* are rigor, relevance, clarity, accessibility, and methodological diversity.

Articles: *JPAE* welcomes contributions from all public affairs educators who seek to reflect on their professional practice and to engage *JPAE* readers in an exploration of what or how to teach. *JPAE* articles are intended to influence experienced educator-specialists but also to be comprehensible and interesting to a broad audience of public affairs teachers. Articles appropriate for publication in *JPAE* include comprehensive literature reviews and meta-analyses, carefully constructed position papers, critical assessments of what we teach and how we teach it, thoughtful essays about commonly shared teaching challenges, experimental and quasi-experimental assessments of students’ learning, evaluations of new curricula or curriculum trends, national and international/comparative disciplinary and pedagogical developments, and field studies of particular teaching methods.

In addition to articles, the editors welcome proposals for symposia. Proposals that are accepted will be announced in the journal and will be accompanied by a call for papers. Submissions for symposia will be considered through the normal review process.

Decisions about the publication of all articles are based on the recommendation of members of the editorial board using a blind review process. Substantive content, writing style, and length are all relevant to a decision to publish a manuscript. Depending on the type of manuscript, the review process takes into account the following criteria:

- Research-based: adequacy of theoretical grounding; reliability and validity of findings; significance of the topic; significance of the findings.
- Interpretive, reflective, critical, theoretical: significance of the topic; quality of the argument; quality of the supporting evidence.
- Creative pedagogy: creativity of the approach; soundness of the explanation; evidence of effectiveness; utility for faculty.
- Case studies: pedagogical value; scope of potential use; clear teaching purposes.
- In all cases, writing quality is an important consideration.

Manuscripts that are obviously inappropriate or insufficiently developed will be returned without formal review. Interested authors can better understand the journal’s audience and its expectations for content, quality, and focus by examin-
ing what JPAE has published in recent years or by contacting members of the editorial board or staff.

Manuscripts submitted should not have been published and should not be under consideration elsewhere. Papers presented at a professional conference qualify for consideration; in fact, the submission of manuscripts that have been thoroughly revised following presentation at a professional meeting is encouraged.

In general, authors are strongly encouraged to have their work reviewed and evaluated by colleagues prior to submission for formal review in order to facilitate the editorial process.

Manuscripts should be sent to jpa@unm.edu. Only electronic submissions sent to this email address as Microsoft Word attachments will be considered. Any accompanying message should be addressed simply to “Editors,” not to a particular editor.

In order for manuscripts to be reviewed as quickly as possible, authors are asked to observe the following requirements:

• Ensure that the manuscript is anonymous by leaving off your name and putting self-identifying references in a separate Microsoft Word file and as a separate attachment.
• Use margins of one and one-half (1-1/2) inches at the left, right, top, and bottom of the page.
• JPAE uses the in-text parenthetical reference system with all references at the end of the text in alphabetical order. Notes are to be kept to a minimum. See the Chicago Manual of Style for guidance.

It is important that you identify the type of manuscript you are submitting: (1) research based; (2) interpretive, reflective, critical, or theoretical essay or position paper; (3) creative pedagogy; or (4) teaching case study.

Creative Pedagogy: The purpose of Creative Pedagogy is to feature innovative approaches to teaching specific public affairs subjects or concepts. The goal of this feature is to present experimental exercises, simulations, role plays, or other creative teaching technologies in a format that colleagues can readily use. Submissions are peer reviewed.

Contributions to Creative Pedagogy must include substantive details (e.g., text for the case, role descriptions for a role play exercise) and a narrative discussion about how the pedagogy is used, student response to it, suggestions for instructors who may wish to use it, and results associated with its use. The presentation of the pedagogy should be thorough and lively so that teachers reading the article will be stimulated and able to use the information.

Submissions for Creative Pedagogy should be sent to Editors, JPAE, at jpa@unm.edu, as indicated above.

Review Essays: Reviews will commonly use a cluster format in which several books, videos, software programs, cases, CD-ROMs, Internet sites, or other
instructional materials will be compared and contrasted in an essay. Review essays should offer a point of view but should seek to treat each item in the cluster fairly. Essays could be structured around a comparison of related resources, resources related to the public affairs education enterprise, or resources that directly or indirectly have something to say about public affairs education. Review essays should strive for clarity, brevity, and timeliness. Inquires about review essays should be sent to Mario A. Rivera, Editor, at jpaee@unm.edu.

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Integrating Modes of Systems Thinking into Strategic Planning Education and Practice: The Thinking Persons’ Institute Approach

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Abstract

Working periodically between 1995 and 2005, a team of scholar-practitioners involved in related streams of strategic management and systems thinking developed a series of conceptual maps that attempted to integrate ideas from these theoretical and practical fields. Whimsically dubbed the Thinking Persons’ Institute Worldview, these maps provided the basis for an integrated approach that has been used over the past five years to improve teaching and practical interventions in both areas. This paper reports on successful efforts to teach the TPI worldview to classes of students at the University at Albany, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Strathclyde, although the main emphasis is on a one-week seminar at the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. The paper concludes with an evaluation of these experiences.

As the complexity of public problems and the speed with which they arise increase, developing and teaching effective methods for addressing these problems
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becomes increasingly important. The challenge is to apply to public problems methods that are inclusive, analytic, and quick (Bryson, 2003). The methods should be inclusive of the content knowledge and skill areas brought to bear on the problem and the variety of stakeholders represented in the process. The methods should be suitably analytic so that the wrong problem is not solved, solutions do not actually create the problem that was to be solved, or worse problems do not result (Mitroff and Featheringham, 1974; Wildavsky, 1979). In practical terms, this means building additional systems thinking tools and techniques into more standard approaches to strategic planning and management (Bryson, 2004a; Eden and Ackermann, 1998; Richmond, 1997; Senge, 1990). Finally, the methods should be quick so that they can involve busy managers and ensure that the problems do not fester or become worse while solutions are being developed.

The challenge is made more difficult because of the fact that, while it is not necessarily hard to cope with any two of these challenges, it is extremely hard to cope effectively with all three simultaneously. In other words, it is fairly easy to engage a relatively large group of people in a quick strategic planning process, but without much exploratory or in-depth analysis (Holman and Devane, 1999). It is also fairly easy to engage a large group of people and to include significant amounts of analysis, but doing so quickly is hard (Eden and Ackermann, 1998; Bryson, 2004a). Finally, it is relatively easy to do quick analysis, but only with small groups. In contrast, it is a far bigger challenge to do all three simultaneously—that is, to be inclusive, analytic, and quick.

This article describes the efforts of six academics from three different disciplines to meet this challenge by developing an approach to integrating modes of systems thinking into public strategic management education and practice. The article covers several topics: an approach to interdisciplinary theory and method development, an approach to teaching the theory and method, and a parallel story of professional development for the developers.

The article is presented in several parts. The first describes how the Thinking Persons’ Institute (TPI) Worldview came about. Next, the integrated view is presented in more detail. Then come several sections in which we describe how the approach can be taught. We conclude with observations about the importance of the integrated view, interdisciplinary theory and method development, and professional development for interdisciplinary teams of academics.

THE THINKING PERSONS’ INSTITUTE STORY IN BRIEF

In 1995 the authors gathered at Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky for a week of spelunking, brainstorming, and theory development. We brought with us over a century of experience in the theory and practice of strategic management (from two complementary points of view) and policy making using system dynamics modeling. All participants had considerable experience working with teams of public and private sector managers who were struggling with
complex policy and strategic problems. We also had a number of superficial reasons for believing that time devoted to cross-disciplinary theory building would be useful. For example, all schools of thought present shared a common practice of building different types of word-and-arrow diagrams, often with live-screen, computer-projected support, in front of client groups who were struggling with important strategy and policy problems. We felt that this was more than coincidental and that we might share some deeper theoretical underpinnings.

The suspicion that we had deeper reasons to be talking with one another was well founded. As it turns out, system dynamics modeling has implicit in its core an implied theory of policy and strategy development. And strategic management is in the end focused on the dynamics of changing a system (e.g., Morecroft, 1984; Warren, 2002). In many ways and for many years, we had been looking at opposite sides of the same coin. It was time for each twosome to turn the coin over and explore what was on the flip side, hidden from normal view.

To begin with, we affirmed that all six of us shared a common purpose and focus when we worked directly with client groups—to discover, refine, and then implement strategic and policy change with teams of managers in organizational settings. In addition, we discovered that we shared a deep interest in stakeholders as they contribute to strategic planning outcomes and as their differing points of view create unexpected feedback loops and unintended dynamics within complex systems (Bryson, 2004b; Eden and Ackermann, 1998; Finn, 1996). However, there were different theoretical underpinnings: a feedback systems view of societal problems; cognitive psychology and systems thinking; leadership and public and business management. System dynamics modelers saw system structures as the web of accumulations and feedback loops that ultimately drive the behavior of a complex system over time (Forrester, 1961; Richardson, 1991; Sterman, 2000). On the other hand, system structure could also be seen as a delicately worked out set of negotiated social orders crafted between key policy stakeholders and sustained through social mechanisms within any organization (Eden and Ackermann, 1998). These two views of system structure, we discovered, do not contradict one another (Giddens, 1979, 1984).

All of us were keenly interested in different understandings of mental models. Our training in strategic planning taught us that individual thinking matters and that strategy change efforts should begin with an understanding of people’s initial starting points. System dynamics modelers knew that mental models drive stakeholder actions within complex systems and that the key to understanding complexity begins by first understanding individual managers’ mental models (e.g., Richardson, Andersen, Stewart, and Maxwell, 1994). Finally, we noted that our respective approaches to working with teams of managers led to quite different methods for using quantitative data from an organization’s archives—that is, how we use numbers and measurable quantities in our work. But these differences did not conflict. Rather, we found that we needed to combine the best of the
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theoretical and empirical approaches from all schools to do the best job of policy design and strategic planning and management for our client groups.

The group continued to meet, talk, think, and sketch for a number of years. We met twice a year for a total of two weeks in which we combined work and play. At the end of this time, we wound up with three densely concentrated conceptual maps that clarified our thinking. These conceptual maps sought to show the interrelationship between both theoretical assertions and their practical implications. These maps are inevitably dense and complex because they synthesize the entirety of several years of dialogue. However, we present here a small portion of the maps, intending to show by example how the concepts and tools behind our collective work weave together to form these concept maps.

Strategy Making in the TPI Worldview

The core of TPI thinking, which took some years to distill, is captured in the map shown in Figure 1. The top of Figure 1 shows the goal that all subscribe to: the inspiration and mobilization of others to undertake considered and collective strategic action. Almost every word of that phrase is crucial. Undertake action implies that the goal is the implementation of change, not merely reflection. That the action is collective reflects our presumption that the process should be inclusive and coalition-based and therefore likely to be politically viable.

Figure 1. Essential Assumptions Underlying the Approach to Strategic Thinking and Acting
goal of considered strategic action reflects the effort in the approach to go beyond initial predilections, to get to deep thoughts about what changes have a chance of actually producing the desired strategic results.

The map in Figure 1 also reveals elements of the perspectives that inform the TPI approach. Leadership is reflected in managing strategic change and the emphasis on strategy making as a political process. The contribution of systems thinking and simulation is reflected in the assertions that system structure determines system behavior and strategy change can happen when structure changes. Finally, the claim that system structure arises from socially negotiated order traces to a particularly powerful approach to strategic management, which, as the diagram suggests, permeates the entire approach.

The central point of Figure 1 is the simple but powerful insight that, while both system structure changes and political (power) processes contribute to achieving considered and collective strategic action, integrating these two approaches (by recognizing and managing individual thinking and social negotiation processes around structural change) creates an approach more likely to achieve successful outcomes than either approach taken on its own (i.e., focusing on either structural change or on politics) (Bolman and Deal, 2003).

Figure 2 expands on this approach to strategic thinking and management by exploring the political and power processes involved in strategy development.
All members of the group recognized the importance of leadership to the success or failure of strategic planning and management processes. Crosby and Bryson’s (1992, 2005) work provided an explicit framework for integrating important leadership factors. Figure 3 illustrates how leadership informs the process.

Figure 3 highlights a view of leadership in strategic planning and change that emphasizes different roles of the leaders of change and different settings for strategic conversations. The leaders (and there typically are several) are designers of the process. Leadership involves sponsoring, championing, and facilitating change. Leaders employ forums for discussion, arenas for making and implementing decisions, and formal and informal courts for managing residual disputes and enforcing underlying norms in the system (Bryson, 2004a).

The final component of the process involves systems thinking and, when the stakes and complexity are high enough, computer simulation. Simulation may be necessary to trace out the dynamic implications of the structural assumptions arising out of the strategic planning conversations that emerge from the interactions in the processes in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 4 captures the essential points of view underlying the need for and use of interactive modeling through computer simulation for policy analysis (Richardson and Pugh, 1981; Sterman, 2000). Of course, these systems modeling components are not meant to be taken in isolation. They must be integrated with the political and leadership factors as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 3. Selected Concepts Relating to Leadership

Note: Nonitalicized statements on the left of the figure show assertions; italicized statements on the right show the practical implications.
Tools

The view discussed above brings together concepts and mid-range theoretical statements. However, in working with client groups, each of us used different group intervention tools and techniques. The systems modelers use causal loop diagramming to drive the formulation of dynamic simulation models that can be used for formal experimentation and policy testing. Works by Bryson (2004a), Eden and Ackermann (1998), and Finn (1996) on strategic planning emphasize the use of formal stakeholder analyses and oval mapping tools within the context of well-designed and facilitated workshops to drive change process design. Eden, Ackermann, and Bryson use an analysis of distinctive competences linked to strategic goals to arrive at a sense of strategic intent, often culminating with the development of performance measures (Eden and Ackermann, 1998; Bryson, Ackermann, and Eden, 2006). Figure 5 presents a selection of TPI tools.

Figure 4. Systems Thinking and Simulation for Policy Analysis

Note: Nonitalicized statements on the left of the figure show assertions; italicized statements on the right show the practical implications.
A Dilemma: How To Teach Such a Complicated Set of Concepts and Process Skills?

We were able to use the integration of these concepts in our own practice. In addition, our recent publications have reflected this integration and are referenced below. We believed that the integrated process would be useful and of interest to others, and so wanted to teach the approach, but realized that doing so presented a number of challenges. The maps were too dense to be taught to a good class of graduate students without a careful buildup and additional instructional aids. To make these maps more concrete, grounded, and easier to grasp, we created the teaching case and linear process map described below.

The GORA Case Study. The Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance (GORA) case is based loosely on a project involving the New York State Office of Regulatory and Management Assistance (ORMA), originally undertaken by staff of the Center for Technology in Government at the University at Albany. The original project analyzed the consequences of installing a voice-activated customer service system to support an increase in the volume of work coming into the agency.
The GORA case study depicts the dilemma of Eliot Benchman, the newly appointed director of GORA. His mission is to launch a pilot program designed to help citizens cut through government red tape as they attempt to set up small businesses. The governor in Benchman’s state intends to replicate and expand a successful pilot project on a statewide basis. Benchman is at the end of a very successful first year in the program and now faces a number of challenges. Statewide expansion will require an infusion of new resources. Employee morale, initially very high, is beginning to flag as the program begins to ramp up to a larger scale. Benchman is worried about how to replicate and expand his initial successes with limited resources, more and more clients, and a workforce that is beginning to lose some of its zeal. His situation is not untypical of a situation faced by many internal entrepreneurs who are launching innovations within the public sector.

In fact, the GORA case is designed to illustrate a generic set of inter-related stocks, flows, and feedback loops that drive and limit the growth of new public programs. Over the years, this teaching case has been used with hundreds of managers at all levels in Europe, North America, and East Asia. Uniformly, teams of experienced managers quickly connect with the issues that drive this compact case.

In addition to a written case that can lead to class discussions, GORA comes equipped with a small model-based learning environment. Students have a chance to get a feel for how such models are built by engaging in a series of concept mapping exercises. In some cases, students working in small teams actually code up parts of the simulation model. Later, working in teams, students get a chance to try out their own policies in a live simulation demonstration. The instructor runs the model to implement policies designed by student teams. Reviewing the simulation runs provides an additional opportunity for structured student discussion. Appendix 1 presents the text version of the GORA case, and Appendix 2 presents several views of the running simulation model that supports the case.

Applying the TPI Process. In our consulting practice with client groups, the actual sequence in which tools are used and concepts come into play can vary dramatically from case to case. However, to explain the overall process in a teaching situation, we decided to settle upon a more or less linear way of talking about the process, consisting of the following steps (see Appendix 3 for more detail):

1. Overview of the TPI ways of thinking, processes, and tools
2. Getting started
3. Stakeholder analysis and management
4. Analysis of external environment and dynamics
5. Analysis of internal environment and dynamics
6. System modeling and negotiation
7. Strategy and policy design and testing
8. Implementation
9. Cycling back through these steps.
The first step outlines the entire process. The second step, Getting Started, presents a series of concepts and tasks useful for assembling the right client team (Ackermann and Eden with Brown, 2005), designing a first-cut strategy change process, and clarifying team and client roles. These activities lead naturally to the third step of Stakeholder Analysis and Management, activities and techniques designed to get a client group to focus on who the important stakeholders are, including who holds power and influence. Additional techniques focus on how the interests of key stakeholders can be managed to help the organization reach its strategy change goals (Ackermann and Eden, 2003; Bryson, 2004b).

The fourth and fifth steps focus on tools and techniques designed to facilitate the identification and analysis of dynamics both internal and external to the organization. System modelers have a foreshortened version of these steps that are wrapped around “reference model elicitation” exercises focused on getting clients to draw graphs of key variables against time (Saeed, 1992; Luna et al., 2004). The strategy literature contains a much richer array of tools and techniques, including external environmental analyses focused on external forces and trends, key resource controllers, competitors, mandates, opportunities and threats, and alternative futures. For internal environmental analyses, tools and techniques are used to explore strategic issues in relation to goals and to analyze resources, distinctive competencies, current strategies in use (Ackermann and Eden with Brown, 2005; Bryson, Ackermann, and Eden, 2006), performance measures, strengths, weaknesses, and mission and values (Bryson, 2004a).

The sixth step, System Modeling and Negotiation, combines qualitative techniques for eliciting refined mental models from clients (Eden, 1994; Howick, Ackermann, and Andersen, 2004) with more hard-edged modeling skills, including formulating and running a formal simulation model. Building formal simulation models requires advanced coursework that we did not, and probably could not, cover in our one-week seminar discussed below. However, in practice, only some strategy and policy design exercises require formal simulation, while the numerous tools used to support system modeling and negotiation are uniformly helpful thought support tools for most managers and most problems.

The next two steps, Strategy and Policy Design and Testing and Implementation, bring together all the analytic efforts of the previous steps. These steps include checking political feasibility as well as building and sustaining cognitive and emotional commitment to designing performance measures, control systems, and reward systems. Often, these steps culminate with a vision of success for the organization in the future. The final step, cycling back through the steps, suggests the process should be considered iterative.

Delivering the Teachable Chunks

Once we had a good teaching case and a simplified step-by-step process, we were able to design a one-week seminar to teach the TPI approach.
Our first such seminar took place at Rockefeller College of the University at Albany. Eighteen students participated. This was the shakedown cruise for a curriculum that was subsequently tuned up and presented to 20 students at the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. Both of these initial offerings of the curriculum were designed for master of public administration and master of public policy students who were being introduced to the strategic management process. The third offering, at the Graduate School of Business at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, was aimed at an audience of 24 experienced British business practitioners already steeped in strategic management as defined by the courses and books of Eden and Ackermann. The third offering thus shifted somewhat to accommodate these students’ pre-existing knowledge. Below we discuss in further detail the curriculum as it was presented at the Humphrey Institute.

Appendix 4 presents in outline form the curriculum that we used to present the process in a one-week format in Minneapolis. This presentation took advantage of top-down and bottom-up, theoretical and practical, abstract and concrete approaches to the material. Early on in the first morning, we presented the full maps in all their complexity. Our intent was not to convey details of the approach, but to give students a series of icons representing the full scope of the material that we intended to cover. Then a team of three faculty members began to teach individual chunks of the curriculum, with each piece of material organized around the GORA case. Two of these curricular chunks are discussed in more detail below.

Each segment of material included some lecture material followed by hands-on exercises that allowed teams of students to practice the skills in the lecture and to reflect on some of the conceptual issues. Because all of the hands-on exercises were focused on the same case study, students had a chance to link techniques and approaches from previous lectures, examples, and tools to the material at hand. After the exercises, the class turned to a higher-level conceptual reflection on the concepts that guided the exercises. To start these discussions, the lead faculty returned to the conceptual overview, tool, and leadership maps, drawing on a public screen the links that had just been discussed. This map buildup began with a blank map in the first workshop segment and over time grew to the full complexity of the three maps by the end of the workshop. Lecture by lecture and day by day, students watched the conceptual complexity grow on the public maps being displayed. At each stage, the faculty members led question-and-answer sessions to help build student understanding of the full range of concepts and tools being put into play.

The whole experience ended with an assignment designed to pull all of the smaller pieces together. Working in teams, students used the concepts and tools of the class to complete a full “soup-to-nuts” project. Specifically, they had to create a 20-page memorandum with supporting tables, maps, and figures that analyzed the GORA case and presented recommendations.
Examples of Teachable Chunks

In order to give a more grounded feel for how instruction went in each of these modules, we have selected two to discuss in greater detail below.

**Chunk One: Stakeholder Mapping.** We used two stakeholder analysis techniques. The first was what Bryson (2004a, 2000b) calls the basic stakeholder analysis technique. The technique involves having the analysts do three things. The first task was simply to brainstorm a list of stakeholders who have a claim of some sort on GORA’s attention, resources, or output, or who are affected by that output. Each stakeholder’s name was placed at the top of a separate flipchart sheet. The second task was to determine what criteria each stakeholder uses to assess GORA’s performance. This was done by dividing the large group into smaller groups and giving each small group the flipchart sheets for three or four different stakeholders. The group was then asked to list for each stakeholder (on the relevant sheet) what it imagined the stakeholder’s assessment criteria are. And the third task is to make a judgment about how well the stakeholder thinks GORA is doing against the stakeholder’s criteria. This task was accomplished using the same small groups that developed the criteria. The results were discussed in a large group setting and the resulting strategic issues, candidate strategic goals, and policy and managerial implications for GORA were noted. After the exercise was over, the results were typed up and reproduced for distribution to the instructors and class participants.

Next, a power-versus-interest grid was constructed based on the work of Eden and Ackermann (1998, 121-125, 344-346) and Ackermann and Eden (2003). The grid arrays stakeholders along two dimensions: their presumed interest in the achievement of GORA’s goals (whether or not they support GORA itself) and their presumed power to help or hinder production of those outcomes (by helping GORA or otherwise). The result is a matrix of players (those with high interest and power), context setters (those with high power but low interest), subjects (those having high interest but low power), and the crowd (that is, those with low interest and power). The grid was constructed on a large flipchart-covered surface in front of the whole group. The stakeholder names identified in the previous exercise were transcribed onto large Post-It® notes that were placed on the grid where the large group agreed they belonged. Considerable discussion sometimes occurred before the group agreed on where a stakeholder belonged on the grid. Once the grid was completed, the results were discussed, and resulting strategic issues, candidate strategic goals, and policy and managerial implications for GORA were noted. Again, after the exercise was over, the results were typed up and reproduced for distribution to the instructors and class participants.

**Chunk Two: Interacting with a Simulation Model for the GORA Case.** After working with the GORA case from a stakeholder point of view, analyzing the case in small groups, and making initial recommendations for what Benchman should do, the participants in the workshop then used some of the systems thinking tools to dig deeper into the case. To get a dynamic perspective, they were asked...
to draw graphs over time of the variables they thought were important (Appendix 2a). Using those graphs as a focus, they worked to sketch the causal feedback structure that they guessed was responsible for those dynamics. For example, incoming requests to GORA for help doubled every six months, suggesting some sort of self-reinforcing feedback loop. Most of the participants saw this loop as the one captured in the first view of GORA’s structure shown in Appendix 2b. The group reviewed each other’s pictures of system structure and then turned their attention to an interactive presentation of a formal model of GORA.

The formal simulation model is simple enough to be accessible to students in the early stages of learning to use systems thinking tools, but rich enough to allow the testing of most policy options that groups suggest. We returned to the list of suggestions the group made earlier for what Benchman should do and tried as many as time permitted. For example, “Use the World Wide Web to increase the number of packets GORA can handle” became recast as “Increase the parameter representing ‘normal productivity’ of a GORA staff member.” The result of a 200 percent increase in productivity was a set of graphs in which more was getting done, but the future of the organization was essentially unchanged: in other words, workload still rose, the quality of work declined dramatically, and the system stabilized with a large portion of potential demand for GORA’s services still unmet.

The group tried other policy options, each time using the structure of the model to understand why the policy options produced the observed dynamics. Each time, the group talked about the reasonableness of the results and used the model structure and simulations to reflect on the real system.

One policy option goes beyond the typical options available to public sector organizations whose budgets come from state legislatures: charge money for GORA services and return the revenues to GORA to use to hire more staff to handle rising demand. The simulation model is formulated to allow such a test. Simulations runs show that it is possible to raise price sufficiently to build adequate staff without shutting down demand. Charging for GORA services can work. But such a policy strikes at the heart of the nature of GORA as a public service organization and takes the discussion to a new level by focusing on the mission of, mandates facing, and overall design of GORA. The discussion turns away from simulating GORA to talking about outsourcing some of GORA services to companies that can charge for their services and keep their revenues. The focus shifts, rightly, from a conversation about policy simulations to a focus on GORA’s distinctive competencies and the potential for leadership in GORA to manage a transition to a new agency role. These are topics covered by the next parts of the approach and must be addressed by student teams in their final projects.

Results of Early Efforts to Teach the Integrated Approach

Presenting the approach in five full days of instruction was a challenge. The material to be covered varied greatly in a number of ways. First, concepts ranged
from very abstract to quite concrete. Second, the approach includes ways of thinking about and making use of both content and process. Third, qualitative and quantitative data must be considered. And fourth, the approach is meant to be both theoretically challenging and practically useful. In order to accommodate these dimensions, we believed that learning had to be both individual and team-based. Verbal, written, and analytic skills had to be emphasized. A variety of learning styles had to be accommodated. We concluded, therefore, that pedagogical approaches had to include lectures and small- and large-group discussions, learning-by-doing, individual coaching by the instructors when needed, and continuous assessments throughout the week to make sure we were covering the material effectively and making any necessary and useful mid-course corrections.

We think that for the most part we succeeded. The course evaluations for the Humphrey Institute offering were excellent. University of Minnesota standard teaching evaluation forms were used to collect anonymous quantitative and qualitative course assessments from the students; all 20 of the students in the class completed the form. Students answered the following questions using a 7-point scale (1=very poor, 7=exceptional; mean responses and standard deviations are noted):

- How would you rate the instructors’ overall teaching ability?
  Mean, 6.8; s.d., 0.4
- How would you rate the instructors’ knowledge of the subject matter?
  Mean, 6.9; s.d., 0.2
- How would you rate the instructors’ respect and concern for students?
  Mean, 6.8; s.d., 0.4
- How much would you say you learned in this course?
  Mean, 6.4; s.d., 0.6

In response to open-ended questions, students were almost uniformly enthusiastic about the course, although several students also indicated that the sheer volume of material, pace of instruction, and intensity of the course were at the limits of what they could absorb. Frankly, we expected more comments like that than we got. We conclude that we pushed as hard as we could and for the most part succeeded quite well in introducing students to the approach.

While we were successful in introducing the approach, we cannot say that students who succeeded in the course were actually well equipped to put the approach into practice. Only very skilled management consultants are likely to have the kind of experience base and the craft knowledge that would allow them to make immediate use of the approach in practice. The five-day course therefore would need to be linked to additional coursework, practical experience, and coaching before participants could make the approach as a whole an effective part of their practice. On the other hand, later feedback from many of the class participants indicates that they have made effective use of various parts of the approach in their own practice.
Several serious limitations to offering the course must be mentioned. First, this was expensive instruction. The Humphrey course for 20 students was team-taught by three faculty members for several reasons, including our desire to have at least one faculty member from each of the original pairs of participants, make sure that we had adequate expertise in the room to cover all aspects of the approach, and ensure that each student and project team could receive coaching on an as-needed basis. Second, the instruction was intensive and involved “total immersion” for five days. The faculty and some students had difficulty fitting the course into their schedules. Third, because of its shortness and intensity, there was not much time for student reflection, although it is also not clear whether spreading the course out in time would have enhanced learning. And finally, there are few academics or practitioners who could have taught the course. There is a supply problem on the instruction side. A “teaching the teachers” program would no doubt be necessary in order to enhance teaching capacity.

Summary

In this paper, we described the TPI approach to integrating modes of systems thinking into strategic management education and practice. The approach is designed to address three challenges of current strategic management practice; specifically, the need to be inclusive, analytic, and quick. To what extent have we succeeded in meeting these three objectives?

Inclusive. The use of group-generated word-and-arrow diagrams and computer-supported group modeling enables substantial inclusion of participants and viewpoints, and so ownership on the part of each member of the group. In addition, bringing stakeholder analysis into the overall approach helps improve upon the typical single-perspective approach to system modeling; specifically, suggested policies tested analytically through the simulation model can also be tested for political feasibility.

Analytic. No serious theoretical conflicts arose from using analytic approaches drawn from differing traditions. On the contrary, the interactions between the approaches in the classroom created a practical and powerful dialectic force between participants. Individual thinking about the case interacted with the perspectives of different stakeholders, as well as the results of possible policy initiatives as explored by the system dynamics simulation. Testing possible strategies through the analytical precision of simulation modeling forced participants to revisit their own assumptions. Cycling between different aspects of the approach forced more integrated thinking about the issues being addressed in the case.

Quick. In some ways, the approach was quick. The total immersion of the five-day course allowed for more inclusion and analysis than might typically occur in a consulting intervention that likely would have had to be spread out in time. But it is more likely that the integration of the different approaches has extended the amount of time needed with a group. Class participants had to spend more
time dealing with the dilemmas and paradoxes that can arise from multiple perspectives, raising puzzling issues that in the extreme might have created a form of debilitating complexity that precluded reaching agreement expeditiously (Eden, Jones, Sims, and Smithin, 1981). But the need to deal with the dilemmas and paradoxes in the GORA case may also be seen as a real strength of the process, one that participants clearly seemed to appreciate. The TPI approach thus does not eliminate the challenge of needing to be inclusive, analytic, and quick, but it does provide a conceptual frame, process, and tools to cope effectively with the challenge in some circumstances.

We also described in some detail a successful attempt to teach the TPI approach in an intensive five-day format at the Humphrey Institute. An earlier, shorter offering at Rockefeller College informed the Humphrey offering, and the Humphrey offering informed a subsequent offering in Scotland aimed at skilled practitioners. We believe there is merit to the integrated approach, we invite others to adopt all or parts of it in order to address the three challenges in their teaching and practice, and we are happy to advise others on how this might be done. But whether or not the approach is adopted, the broader challenge remains: how to have methods of addressing public problems that are inclusive, analytic, and quick.

Lessons for Multi-Methodology Work. An important lesson of this story is how much time it takes to develop interdisciplinary conceptualizations and ways of teaching them. There is some literature that addresses the inherent difficulties in “multi-methodology” work (e.g., Mingers and Brocklesby, 1997). In light of this literature, it is unsurprising that we misunderstood several of the words we each used. For example, the words “strategy” and “structure” were used by each author, but turned out to have more variety of meaning than we initially anticipated. We actually expected greater problems arising from three rather different theoretical views of organizations, group decision making, systems thinking, and appropriate ways of helping groups agree on strategic direction and policies. However, the theories were less in conflict than expected, perhaps because we shared a significant commitment to developing better ways of supporting groups—although this also might mean that we explored the different theoretical perspectives in less depth than we should have.

The group met for a total of 25 or more very full days to develop the approach and the basic way to teach it. Additional time was spent on preparing for the Albany, Minnesota, and Glasgow course offerings. The vast majority of that time was spent trying to understand how each other and each other’s fields approached the challenges we were trying to address. Considerable dialogue was necessary to bridge the gaps and to develop a common conceptualization we could all understand and support. The result, we believe, is a conceptualization that is quite powerful and is strong where our individually held conceptualizations were weak.

We think the process we followed offers some interesting lessons for others interested in interdisciplinary theory, method, and course development. One of
the most important lessons is that interdisciplinary theory, method, and course development involves almost necessarily the simultaneous professional development of the developers. The two go hand in hand. In our case, the two worked well for several reasons. First, it made a difference that we all knew one another (although not necessarily well) when the effort began. We started the effort as three pairs: George and David, John and Chuck, and Fran and Colin were close colleagues, while each twosome had at least some close connections with the other twosomes. Second, we each committed to spending significant amounts of time with the group. Third, we had a project in mind, although the nature of the project changed over time. Initially, we just sought mutual understanding. Then we decided to develop a shared conceptualization and process. Finally, we wanted to figure out how to teach the process, realizing that in doing so we would have a vehicle for solving questions or problems with the conceptualization that at the time we did not know how to resolve. Fourth, we included various kinds of relationship building and enjoyment into our process. We met in interesting places; we always included daily exercise; we allowed for individual free time; and in general were appreciative and solicitous of one another. Friendship and simply having a good time together were very important goals in their own right. As a result, we became an “invisible college” (Crane, 1972) that mirrored the practices of other successful interdisciplinary teams (Bozeman and Corley, 2004).

In the end, we have a useful conceptualization that addresses some aspects of the challenges of inclusion, analysis, and speed. We also have a way of teaching it. But the influence of the conceptualization on our other teaching and practice engagements is also strong. Aspects of the approach have been included in other courses that each of us teaches, and our ways of thinking and professional practice have been permanently altered as a result of our joint professional development efforts.

Notes
1. Actually, Thinking Persons’ Institute is a cleaned-up version of an inadvertent spoonerism that popped up very early on in our work together. While struggling over the basic notion of what it was that bound all of us together, one of our members blurted out with some excitement that we shared a common interest in “helping thinkles peep.” We immediately became the Thinkle Peepers’ Institute, but for obvious reasons hesitate to use that term in more decorous academic settings.
2. Andersen and Richardson are system dynamicists. Bryson and Finn are strategic planners coming out of a public and nonprofit management background. Ackermann and Eden are strategic planners coming out of management science, and both had prior experience with system dynamics. Several books by the various members of the TPI laid out much of our basic points of view before beginning this work. See especially Bryson (1995), Bryson and Crosby (1992), Eden and Ackerman (1998), Richardson (1991), Richardson and Pugh (1981), and Roberts et al. (1981), and Finn (1996).
3. For example, the Oval Mapping Technique (OMT) described by Eden and Ackerman (1998) is a word-and-arrow diagramming method supported by the interactive computer modeling software known as Decision Explorer (www.banxia.com). In the Resources section at the end of his book, Bryson (1995, 2004) described how to use OMT to derive issues and strategies in the context of his approach to strategic planning. Richardson and Andersen routinely worked with graphically
oriented interactive simulation software such as Vensim (www.vensim.com), which also created word-and-arrow diagrams as an early stage in model conceptualization and formulation.

4. Building on the work of others (e.g., Milling, 1989; Morecroft, 1984, Zahn and Greschner, 1993), Warren (2002) makes this notion explicit with his own approach to linking system dynamics to a resource-based view of strategy.

5. All members work with client groups in facilitated face-to-face meetings to develop strategy for an organization. See especially Ackermann and Eden with Brown (2005), Andersen and Richardson (1997), Bryson (2004a), Eden and Ackermann (1998), Richardson and Andersen (1995), and Zagonel et al. (2004).

References


Integrating Modes of Systems Thinking into Strategic Planning Education and Practice


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Appendix I

The Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance Case Study

Managing Rapid Growth in the Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance (GORA)

Madeleine Talbot was elected governor of the State of Goodwill on a platform that stressed economic development and new job creation. An important plank of her electoral platform emphasized fostering small business development by “cutting the red tape” of government regulation. To follow through on her campaign promises, Talbot has established the Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance (GORA). GORA’s mission is to assist entrepreneurs starting new business ventures in the state by giving them full and complete information on government regulations and assisting them in dealing with state, local, and federal regulatory bodies. For example, GORA gives out information on how to incorporate, file employee taxes, get local building permits and zoning approvals, fill out and comply with federal corporate tax requirements, and so on. To a large degree, GORA’s mission is to be a one-stop shopping place where information about government regulations can be gathered quickly and easily. Occasionally, GORA staff will become involved in technical assistance, helping entrepreneurs work out a local siting arrangement or helping a larger industry deal with complex environmental regulations.

GORA launched its programs with a small staff (initially only seven technical support staff) on a pilot basis in the mid-state region. GORA’s creation was a high-visibility event accompanied by considerable press coverage and followed up by public service news spots on local radio and television announcing the new “red tape busters” services being offered by the new administration. A toll-free phone line was established to handle initial contacts with citizens. Early on, GORA’s staff experienced a number of high visibility success stories that were reported on in the press. The agency quickly developed a reputation in the mid-state region of being highly competent and of getting its job done well.

Rapid Growth in Program is Causing Internal Management Problems

GORA’s administrator, Eliot Benchman, is now considering expanding the pilot program from its limited scope in the mid-state region to a statewide program. However, Benchman is concerned about what will be entailed in a program of statewide scale. Statistics available from the Secretary of State indicate that up to 400,000 new business enterprises of one sort or another are started each year in the State of Goodwill. Most of these center around the metropolitan hub of Gotham City and its suburbs, an area not covered by the small initial pilot.

In addition, while the launch of GORA has been an unmitigated success to the external world, the public success of the program has not looked so effortless from within the new agency. Indeed, the first year has been nothing short of chaotic, and key staff have felt lucky that major mistakes have not yet been made to tarnish the agency’s very strong external reputation. When the agency opened its doors one year ago after an initial burst of publicity, it was handling about 250 citizen transactions per month. Six months into its operations, GORA was handling 500 transactions per month. At the end of its first year, this number has jumped to 1,000 transactions per month—all of this growth being the product of the agency’s terrific public success.

However, the burgeoning expansion in workload has caused severe growth pains within the organization. After only several months of operation, workload became intense enough that Benchman sought and received authorization for overtime for the seven staff who were involved in direct service to the public. The staff seemed to ap-
preciate the overtime pay, and, with their pride in their work, things seemed to be under control for a while.

However, as workload continued to grow, it became clear that, even with extensive overtime, the existing staff could not handle the volume of work. Six months into GORA’s existence, Benchman got special authorization to expand the initial staff serving the public from 7 to 10 positions. Even with the best of cooperation from budget and civil service, it has taken Benchman nearly four months to get these new people on board—delays in the system seem unavoidable. In addition, once the new staff members were hired, Benchman lacked the capacity to train them and bring them up to speed. He was caught in a tough bind: the new staff lacked the necessary skills and training to be truly effective in their jobs, and the experienced staff were simply too swamped with work to spend enough time to adequately train the new staff. In fact, it seemed as if the chaos associated with adding new staff was actually decreasing rather than increasing overall productivity in the office.

In addition, trained, skilled staff members were still working long hours with little time to take a break, often with mandatory overtime. The most experienced staff members were beginning to experience a form of worker burnout; two of the best had already resigned because of the prolonged period of pressure within the agency. Benchman knew that he could not afford to have his most experienced staff quit while it was so hard to bring new staff on board and train them. He feared getting into a cycle of low morale and high staff turnover characteristic of so many other state agencies that he had known in the past. This would be especially problematic if the program were to continue to grow at its present rate as it expanded to a statewide scope.

Benchman’s Preliminary Analysis and Next Year’s Budget Request

The budget for GORA’s second year of operations is due soon, and Benchman is undertaking an analysis of his operations to understand better how to address some of his internal program management concerns. Table 1 below contains Benchman’s preliminary analysis of how workload breaks down within GORA. The figures in Table 1 are based on an annual workload of 12,000 transactions per year, or an annualization of the 1,000 transactions per month that the agency is experiencing at the end of its first year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Transaction</th>
<th>Staff Hours Per Transaction</th>
<th>Percent of All Contact</th>
<th>Annual Volume</th>
<th>Annual Staff Hours</th>
<th>Full-Time Equivalent Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Information Packet</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailored Information Packet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Technical Assistance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2,280</td>
<td>18,240</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Technical Assistance</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>27,120</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumed Annual Transaction Volume: 12,000
Staff Needed per 1,000 Annual Transactions: 1.21
As shown in Table 1, GORA undertakes four distinct types of customer-oriented transactions. The bulk of its business (60%) consists of sending out standard and pre-packaged packets of information to citizens who are starting a new business. For example, the new business start kit would contain information on incorporating or forming a partnership, how to get a tax ID number, how to file income taxes for employees, and so on. To determine which packet a citizen needs and to get it out in the mail takes about a half hour of staff time. Benchman estimates that it would take the agency about 3,600 hours of staff time per year, or about 1.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, to perform this function at a base rate of 12,000 transactions per year.

Tailored information packets are the second type of business, making up about 20% of GORA’s business. These are similar to the first, except that the staff will pull together a special package of information to meet the particular needs of a given caller (for example, a citizen who wants to start a barber shop that also sells potted plants might not have all the necessary information in a single pre-packaged packet). Each tailored information packet takes about 1 hour of staff time. As shown in Table 1, putting together 2,400 tailored information packets per year would take 2,400 hours of staff time or about 1.3 FTE staff, assuming 7.5 work hours per day and 250 working days per year.

In addition to providing information packets, GORA provides some technical assistance to citizens who intend to start businesses in the State of Goodwill. This constitutes about 20 percent of the total volume of transactions. The majority of the technical assistance projects involve limited staff involvement taking on average 8 hours of staff time. About 1 percent of the total transactions consist of extended technical assistance and take about three full days of staff time. As shown in Table 1, for a base annual volume of 12,000 transactions, there are about 120 extended technical assistance transactions using staff hours at a rate of 2,880 hours per year, or the efforts of approximately 1.5 FTE staff. In sum, Benchman estimates that adequately handling a transaction volume of 12,000 per year would require 14.5 FTE staff. Using this ratio to form a rule of thumb, he estimates that each additional 1,000 transactions would require an additional 1.21 FTE staff. Benchman is willing to assume that the ratio of types of projects will remain fairly constant as volume expands (unless he does something to change the agency’s mission).

This analysis clearly demonstrates to Benchman the nature of the management problems he has been facing and will be facing in the future. During the early months of GORA’s existence, he was facing 250 transactions per month, or an annual rate of 3,000 transactions per year. At this volume, his analysis showed that he needed 3.6 FTE staff, well within the 7 staff he started with. By mid-year, volume had doubled to 500 transactions per month (6,000 annualized transactions per year) requiring roughly 7.3 FTE staff. By midyear, he was already starting to strain at his staff capacity. As shown in Table 1, by the end of the year, he would need a FTE staff of 14.5 to handle the annualized transaction volume, and even if he didn’t have the burnout and staff turnover problems, his new authorization of 10 staff was already inadequate.

Benchman realized that he had to carefully think through this problem before he made his budget request for the new year. If done right, the new budget could provide him with a long-run solution to his internal management problems. If not done right, he believed that his agency could remain swamped and even get worse in the upcoming year. The bright beginning that GORA had enjoyed could quickly become tarnished. Benchman has set aside two full days in order to more clearly think through his options.
Study Questions
1. How should Benchman formulate his budget request for next year? He has strong support for his program, so this year he could probably ask for a large increase in funding. But how should he plan to maintain the necessary balance between staffing levels and transaction volume? How can he possibly forecast transaction volume and hence the needed staffing level? This is an important issue for Benchman, because a failure to get it right this year would in all likelihood lead him into a position from which he could not support another budget increase next year. Can systems thinking tools help Benchman with his dilemma? If so, how?
2. Regardless of the outcome of the budget request, Benchman has to figure out the internal turmoil that is starting to beset his workforce. What suggestions can you make to Benchman for dealing with the burnout, excessive turnover, and low productivity that he is beginning to experience in new staff? Again, can systems thinking tools help Benchman with this issue as well? If so, how?
Appendix 2a. Base Run Behavior of the GORA Model

The base run (matching the case description) shows a dramatically rising workload and backlog, saturation in the number of staff, a decline in the fraction of experienced workers (from quits), and very low productivity.

The average completions per year in this base simulation run is about 41,000, just a little over 10 percent of the potential market of 400,000 per year. GORA is throttling its own demand.

The dynamics in the first graph are partially explained by the second graph, which shows the workload dramatically rising, productivity trying to keep up but finally collapsing, quality of work plummeting, and more and more experienced personnel quitting.

GORA is clearly an organization with a potentially very unhappy future unless something is done to help it succeed.
Appendix 2b
Systems Model for the GORA Case

Building Up the GORA Model

(Most of) The Structure of the Full GORA Model
Appendix 3
The Full TPI Process

1. Provide an overview of the TPI ways of thinking, processes, and tools
   a. Show worldview elements
   b. Present tools
   c. Discuss approach to leadership
2. Get started on the TPI process itself
   a. Identify client
   b. Designate project sponsor
   c. Enlist project champion
   d. Identify key players
   e. Create initial planning group work (e.g., a top management team)
   f. Craft initial agreement on purpose, logistics, issues, and scope
   g. Assemble full initial work group
   h. Have group articulate hopes and fears for the project
      i. Briefly discuss possible alternative futures
   j. Elicit policy options
   k. Design overall process
   l. Do the work in chunks
   m. Include renegotiation points
   n. Take a quick mental run-through of the whole process
   o. Take a first crack at identifying key issues
3. Analyze and manage stakeholders
   a. Name the stakeholders
   b. Begin analyzing the stakeholders
      i. Articulate the expectations stakeholders have
      ii. Speculate on stakeholder views of existing organization/programs/strategies
      iii. Create a power-versus-interest grid for all stakeholders
   iv. Clarify influence relationships between stakeholders
   v. Identify individual stakeholders’ bases of power and interests
   vi. Consider stakeholders’ stakes in alternative futures
   c. Develop a stakeholder management strategy
   d. Revisit the question of whether the “right” stakeholders are involved in the work group
4. Assess external environment and dynamics; look at:
   a. External forces/trends
   b. Key resource controllers
   c. Competitors
   d. Mandates
   e. Opportunities and threats
   f. Alternative futures
5. Assess internal environment and dynamics; look at:
   a. Resources
   b. Current strategies in use
c. Performance  
d. Mission and values  
e. Internal trends  
f. Strengths and weaknesses

6. Enlist key stakeholders in negotiating development of a system model  
a. Further identify issues  
b. Make use of oval mapping in a group setting and/or development of individual cognitive maps through an interview process  
c. Identify what appear to be the policy levers for influencing system performance  
d. Draft a statement of strategic intent, i.e., a statement that captures goals and key strategies  
i. Negotiate and agree on an aspiration or goal system  
ii. Identify distinctive competencies  
iii. Examine goals and distinctive competencies together to build business model or livelihood scheme  
iv. Develop a mission statement  
v. Prepare a statement of strategic intent that includes mission, aspirations, and key strategies  
e. Take initial steps in developing a dynamic system conceptualization  
i. Elicit client stocks and flows  
ii. Elicit and aggregate policy resources  
f. Create the full model  
g. Test and refine the model

7. Design and test policies and strategies testing, including  
a. Checking political feasibility  
b. Building and sustaining cognitive and emotional commitment

8. Develop an implementation plan and process  
a. Develop a clear description of what success would look like if the changes are fully implemented and the world changes as predicted  
b. Disaggregate policy resources from the model to the organization  
c. Allocate resources  
d. Have a contingent pool of resources available for problem-solving and mid-course corrections  
e. Create a performance measurement system  
f. Design a performance management system, including attention to IT, HRM, and reward systems  
g. Provide a process for regular reviews and modifications of policies and strategies based on feedback from the field

9. Cycle back through these steps  
a. Revisit entire process and conclusions  
b. Review and reflect on the approach
Appendix 4
One-Week Syllabus for Teaching the TPI Approach
at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute

Day 1 Monday Morning
• Overview of the Course
• Overview of the TPI Approach
• Hopes and Fears for the Course
• The GORA Case
• Leadership and Strategic Planning Power Point
• The Student Team Product to be Created by Course End

Day 1 Monday Afternoon
• Stakeholder Analysis Power Point
• Oval Mapping Technique Power Point Slides
• Getting Started with Mapping Software (Decision Explorer) Power Point
• Using Decision Explorer in Brief

Day 2 Tuesday Morning
• Analysis of Decision Explorer Models Power Point

Day 2 Tuesday Afternoon
• System Dynamics and the Approach

Day 3 Wednesday Morning
• System Structure, Behavior, and Learning
• The GORA case

Day 3 Wednesday Afternoon
• Managing Strategic Change
• Developing a Statement of Strategic Intent
• Identifying Aspirations/Goals and Distinctive Competencies
• Mandate, Mission, Vision, and Values

Day 4 Thursday Morning
• Students Report Out on Mandate, Mission, Vision, and Values Worksheet
• GORA’s Implicit Not-Goal Structure
• Developing Alternative Futures

Day 4 Thursday Afternoon
• Report Out on Scenario Development
• Stakeholder Management
• Stakeholder Management Exercise

Day 4 Thursday Evening
• Leadership Exercise

Day 5 Friday Morning
• Implementation and Performance Measurement and Management

Day 5 Friday Afternoon
• Student Teams Work on Team Papers
• Faculty Work with Teams on an As-Needed Basis
Integrating Modes of Systems Thinking into Strategic Planning Education and Practice

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Integrating Writing and Research Skills: Development and Testing of a Rubric to Measure Student Outcomes

Barbara Peat
Indiana University South Bend

Abstract

This article describes a scoring rubric focused on assessing performance on literature review papers, developed as part of a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project. The rubric was the result of an interdisciplinary collaboration between a public affairs faculty member and two English department faculty members. It was piloted on a control group and was tested for interrater reliability. Using it as a pre/post-test measurement, results indicated higher scores on the literature review assignment after the rubric was used. The multiple benefits of using a rubric for improving student performance on such an assignment as both an instruction tool and a scoring instrument are discussed.

Course requirements in higher education have been traditionally designed to develop students’ knowledge and skills in a number of broad areas. In order to provide them with a solid base that they can use in future careers and graduate school, students are generally required to take a variety of general education courses such as math, writing, speech, social sciences, and arts and humanities. Often they take the majority of these courses during the beginning year(s) of their college experience and are later expected to apply the knowledge and skills to content-specific learning. This application of knowledge generally requires a higher level of learning that frequently involves critical thinking and analysis. Content specific courses often require students to demonstrate their knowledge of general education through clear, concise, and comprehensive organization of material in completion of written assignments. In order for students to perform
well at these tasks, they must integrate what they have learned about the mechanics of putting together a well-written paper with what they have learned about content-specific material.

A common expectation of instructors is that students will understand the interrelatedness of learning these basic skills and applying them to critical thinking and writing in content-specific courses. What may be lacking is a means through which to assess the application of writing skills in content areas. Instructors may not be any more in tune with the concept of integrating general education with content learning than are the students, or they may not feel that it is their role, in teaching major-specific material, to grade student work from an integrated perspective. Instructors of major-specific courses may be doing the students as well as future employers an injustice by not giving enough attention to the application of general education skills to content-specific material.

In this manuscript, I discuss the process of developing a rubric used in the scoring of a writing assignment in a research methods class I teach with criminal justice and public affairs students. The rubric is the product of an interdisciplinary collaboration in which I engaged with two English department faculty and was part of a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning grant I received to develop a means by which to assess writing skills in a content-specific core course.

Literature Review

The following information provides a brief review of the literature on the development and use of rubrics in assessing student learning, with particular focus on the relationship between the use of a rubric as an instructional tool and subsequent student performance.

Rubrics in Assessing Student Learning. The development and use of rubrics has received extensive coverage, particularly in education- and assessment-focused journals and books. A great deal of focus has been on by K-12 educators’ use of rubrics (Bernier, 2004; Cornell and Clarke, 1999; Elliott and Kenney, 1996; Enger and Yager, 2000; Lundquist and Sherman, 2003; Martin-Kniep, 2000; Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001; McAlonan, Hotchkiss, Roark, Kenney, and Jackson, 2000; Shaw, 1994). These articles, although just a sampling, are a good indicator of the diversity of subjects in which rubrics have been shown to be helpful in assessing student performance, including mathematics, chemistry, speech and communications, library media instruction, and geography.

Many manuscripts have also been published in education- and assessment-focused journals and books on the topic of the use of rubrics in higher education. Although a number of these writings are focused specifically on the “how to” of rubrics in general (Anson and Dannels, 2002; Huba and Freed, 2000; Kist, 2001; Montgomery, 2000; Moskal, 2000; Simon and Forgette-Giroux, 2001; Soles, 2001; Stevens and Levi, 2005; Walvoord and Anderson, 1998), a number of authors have written of the use of rubrics in a variety of disciplines, includ-
Integrating Writing and Research Skills: Development and Testing of a Rubric

...ing human resource management (Dede, 2002), public affairs (Koliba, 2004), composition (Roen, Pantoja, Yena, Miller, and Waggoner, 2002; Tighe, 2002; Wyngaard and Gehrke, 1996), educational psychology (Meyerson and Adams, 2003), research-focused courses (Wilson and Onwuegbuzie, 1999), and capstone courses for education majors (Scherff, 2002), to name but a few. In conducting the literature review on rubrics in higher education, it readily became apparent that rubrics are used across the curriculum.

A variety of definitions of a rubric exist, but most center on two basic elements: 1) a statement of clear and concise criteria related to assignment requirements, and 2) the design of appropriate scoring schemes. The general purpose of a rubric is to give the instructor a vehicle through which to clarify performance expectations for the students as well as to provide a guide for rating student performance for drafts and completed assignments (Anson and Dannels, 2002; Brookhart, 1999; Dede, 2002; Higgins, 2000; Hubba and Freed, 2000; Kist, 2001; Koliba, 2004; Montgomery, 2000; Moskal, 2000; Moskal and Leydens, 2000; Stevens and Levi, 2005; Soles, 2001). Many examples of rubrics, applicable to a variety of assignments, courses, and programs, can be located in the literature.¹

In assessing written work, a certain level of judgment and subjectivity will be applied. One of the primary benefits of using a rubric with specific scoring criteria is the objectivity it brings to the task of rating student performance. As Moskal points out, “by developing a pre-defined scheme for the evaluation process, the subjectivity involved in evaluating an essay becomes more objective” (2000, 1). Wyngaard and Gehrke (1996) shared this view, stating, “[W]e felt more like objective monitors of a process rather than subjective judges prone to extraneous influences” (70).

A second benefit of a rubric is its use as an instructional tool for clarifying performance expectations for the students by providing them with a list of assessment criteria with predetermined scores and weights (Huba and Freed, 2000; Kist, 2001; Montgomery, 2000; Moskal, 2000; Soles, 2001). A common theme of the writings in this area focuses on the importance of distributing and discussing the performance expectations with the students at the very beginning of the semester through use of the rubric (Anson and Dannels, 2002; Hubba and Freed, 2000; Kist, 2001; Montgomery, 2000; Simon and Forgette-Gieroux, 2001; Soles, 2001). As Anson and Dannels point out, “If students don’t know how you’ll evaluate the product of their work, they can’t use your evaluation productively” (2002, 394). A big advantage to distributing the rubric at the beginning of the semester is that students can use it for self-evaluation. Montgomery (2000, 36) states that “a carefully designed rubric helps both the instructor and the students to define precise criteria for a successful process and/or product prior to and during the completion of the task.”

Other authors have pointed out the need for a detailed rubric to assist the student in better understanding how the instructor scored the paper, rather than...
random comments made throughout the paper without the direct link for the student to better understand the instructor’s expectations and the resulting score. Montgomery (2000, 34) points out that the interpretation of instructor comments are frequently left up to the individual student: “The student must decide whether the comments are informative, instructive, critical, praiseworthy, or a mixture of these” and “these comments may range from terse to elaborate, from incomprehensible to clear.” Students frequently do comparisons with other students in the class and can come away from the experience feeling as if they have not been treated equally. A single score is limited in the feedback it can provide to students. For example, “a student who receives a ‘70’ out of a ‘100’ may not know how to improve his performance on the next assignment” (Moskal, 2000, 4). With a single score, students are often left with a lack of clarity on the precise cause of reduction in points or how to improve. In contrast, a rubric can provide clarity and equity to the process, can give the student useful feedback, and can precisely spell out performance expectations utilizing a variety of categories focused on specific criteria.

The review of the literature on rubrics also specifically assisted in providing information on how to develop rubrics (Anson and Dannels, 2002; Brookhart, 1999; Kist, 2001; Huba and Freed, 2000; Moskal, 2000; Stevens and Levi, 2005). In summary, the basic steps include (1) making a list of desired criteria, (2) deciding how to rate each criterion (for example, what is considered excellent, good, average, etc.), and (3) weighting each criterion. Some authors give more detailed guidelines specific to an assignment. For example, Anson and Dannels (2002) focus specifically on designing rubrics for writing assignments and provide a seven-step process.

The literature also addresses how to establish the interrater reliability of rubrics and to address validity issues. Moskal and Leydens (2000), in addressing reliability concerns for the development of rubrics, provide a list of three questions that can be used to evaluate a rubric. The first two questions address scoring categories. The third question asks, “Would two independent raters arrive at the same score for a given response based on the scoring rubric?” (8). These authors go on to provide suggestions for how to address reliability concerns as well as validity issues, providing guidelines for establishing content-related, construct-related, and criterion-related evidence and giving examples of each.

The review of the literature also identified studies that have been conducted to explore the effectiveness of using a rubric to improve student performance. Soles (2001) provides useful information about a variety of studies that have examined the benefits of rubrics. One of these studies was that of Hillocks (1986) who, in one portion of his extensive exploration of studies that have researched written composition, examines the use of scales. Hillocks concludes that “as a group, these studies indicate rather clearly that engaging young writers actively in the use of criteria, applied to their own or to others’ writing, results not only in more
effective revisions but in superior first drafts” (160). Soles states that “research suggests a positive correlation between a student’s knowledge of evaluative criteria and the grade the student gets on an essay to which that evaluative criteria is applied” (3).

**Purpose of the Present Study**

The review of the literature helped provide focus for a study designed to explore ways through which writing skills in a research class for public affairs students could be improved and students could demonstrate that they could appropriately apply writing skills to content-specific material. As part of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning grant, the two English department faculty members and I developed a scoring rubric to be used for both classroom instruction and scoring a literature review assignment required of students in the research class. The study specifically sought an answer to the question, “Are student papers better, as indicated by higher scores, if the students have a rubric which they can use from the beginning of the semester in developing their papers than if no rubric is used?” The purpose of the study was to increase general knowledge of the ways in which a rubric can be used as an instruction tool as well as to assess written assignments in a content-specific course.

**The Assignment**

This study was based on a literature review assignment required of students in a public affairs research course at a Midwestern university. The goal of this course is that “students will become familiar with research techniques…(and) learn to critically evaluate existing research.” To meet this goal, students are required to develop a research proposal encompassing (1) a literature review, (2) methodology (including research question, hypothesis, variables, sampling procedure, and data collection method), and (3) other information for a research proposal (threats to validity, limitations, directions for future research, and anticipated findings). Through the literature review assignment, students demonstrate their ability to integrate their writing skills with content-specific information.

The majority of students enrolled in the research class are criminal justice majors, because the majority of the majors in the public affairs division are criminal justice majors. However, all students in the public affairs major are required to complete the course. Students from other disciplines, such as general studies and social work, also enroll in the course. Because the research class is a 200-level course, it is anticipated that course enrollment will mainly consist of sophomore-level students who have not only completed the introductory course of their major but who have also completed the 100-level general education courses, including the beginning-level writing course.

During the first two weeks of class, I describe the assignments in detail and give the students written instructions for the first assignment. By the end of the
second week of class, I require the students to select a topic on which they will
develop their research proposal throughout the semester. From their chosen topic,
they develop a research question. They do not actually carry out any research. The
three assignments require students to apply content information to a project of
their interest.

The first of the written assignments, the literature review, was the focus of
our research. The literature review assignment requires students to provide a
minimum of 10 summaries of professional journal articles on the topic they have
chosen. The review is to be well organized, providing detail from the stud-
ies relevant to research principles (hypotheses, sampling, method for gathering
information, method of analysis, and overall conclusions), and relevant to their
research question. I give various examples of literature reviews to the students;
university library personnel and I also provide them with instructions on how to
conduct research.

The literature review, assignment one, accounts for the bulk of the points avail-
able from the written assignments: the literature review is 30 points (25 points
from the assignment and 5 points awarded for getting it in on time), methodol-
ogy is 15 points, and other work for the research proposal is 15 points. The re-
main ing 40 points come from four in-class objective exams worth 10 points each.
This approach requires students to expend significant effort at the beginning of
the semester. This is quite different from many courses requiring the completion
of written assignments toward the end of the semester.

Development of the Rubric

As part of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project, the English
department professors and I developed a rubric and narrative description depict-
ing components of an A paper, a B paper, and so forth for the literature review
assignment. We intended for the rubric and the narrative to be used to assess
the students’ abilities to integrate writing skills and information they learned
from the research course, such as incorporating the students’ abilities to research
professional databases, comprehend what they read, summarize key information,
organize material, and understand concepts.

The original rubric we developed included three main criteria: (1) content,
(2) organization and structure, and (3) appearance and correctness. Each of these
three areas had subcategories of criteria (13 for content, 7 for organization and
structure, and 2 for appearance and correctness), for a total of 22 areas of assess-
ment, each to be scored on a scale of 1-5 (1=poor or absent, 2=needs improve-
ment, 3=acceptable, 4=good, 5=excellent). The group also developed a descrip-
tion of what needed to be included in the review for the paper to be considered
an A paper, a B paper, and so forth. This process is in keeping with that suggest-
ed by Moskal and Leydens (2000), who state that “well designed scoring rubrics
respond to the concern of interrater reliability by establishing a description of

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the scoring criteria in advance” (8). After reviewing this very comprehensive but somewhat lengthy rubric, we developed the condensed version that is shown in Table 1. The narrative depicting the components needed to achieve a specific grade is provided in Table 2. We felt that students could use these instruments in the development of their papers, and that I could use them to assist in discussing expectations with the students both in class and individually, in making score and grade assignments, and in providing feedback to students both in written form through comments made on the paper, via their score on the rubric, and in subsequent individual discussions with the students.

The three of us separately scored and graded the literature review papers from the spring 2001 research class—the comparison group. Both the 22-criteria rubric and the five-criteria rubric were used for this initial assessment of papers. This group of students had only been given the literature review instructions.

Table 1. Rubric for Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Excellent = 5</th>
<th>Needs Improvement = 2</th>
<th>Good = 4</th>
<th>Poor = 1</th>
<th>Acceptable = 3</th>
<th>Absent = 0</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development and organization: clearly stated thesis in introduction, making a case for significance of study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summarization: effective summary of 10 relevant professional journal articles, including information for each article on variables, sample, methodology, and findings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing mechanics: grammar, word choice, and sentence structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion: concludes logically and clearly from evidence presented in body through summaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation: uses appropriate and attractive format and accurate citation and listing of references using APA style.</td>
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<td>TOTAL POINTS</td>
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Table 2.
Grading Narrative

A review of literature clearly identifies previously unanswered questions, poses questions yet to be asked, and challenges commonly accepted answers in order to outline established findings and conflicting evidence, and identifies gaps in the body of scholarship.

An A paper states a strong thesis, identifies and categorizes clear similarities and differences in research, and reconciles differences and identifies gaps for future research in the conclusion. It demonstrates familiarity with a large body of research, appropriate and accurate classification of materials and methods, and critical analysis that addresses apparent contradictory conclusions, different ways of measuring, and different ways of identifying and defining. It is organized with a clear introduction, a well-developed body, and a conclusion that derives logically from the body; it shows logical paragraph and sentence sequence and organization and is free of distracting sentence structure and mechanical errors; and its meaning is clearly and concisely expressed. Finally, it is presented in an attractive format.

A B paper states a fairly clear thesis, identifies and categorizes most similarities and differences in research, usually with clarity, and reconciles most differences and identifies most gaps for future research. It demonstrates fairly good familiarity with an adequate body of research, some skill with appropriately and accurately classifying materials and methods, and critical analysis of most of the apparent contradictory conclusions, different ways of measuring, and different ways of identifying and defining. Its introduction is generally well organized, its body is generally well developed, and its conclusion derives fairly logically from the body. Although it has a few distracting sentence structure and mechanical errors, its meaning is generally clearly and concisely expressed.

A C paper states a thesis that needs strengthening, identifies and categorizes some similarities and differences in research, and attempts to reconcile differences and identify gaps for future research but incompletely or inaccurately recognizes differences and/or inadequately identifies gaps. It provides evidence of some familiarity with a body of research, classifies materials and methods in a usually consistent and careful way, identifies and analyzes some contradictory conclusions, and recognizes some differences in measuring and some differences in identifying and defining. Although the paper has a recognizable introduction, body, and conclusion and some well constructed and appropriately-sequenced paragraphs, it is marred by some distracting sentence structure, mechanical errors, unnecessary wordiness, and/or lapses in style. Overall, it is presented in a format that the reader can use and understand without excess effort.

A D paper needs a much stronger thesis and shows some serious difficulty with identifying and categorizing similarities and differences in research, as well as with reconciling differences and identifying gaps for future research. It shows a flawed
They had not been provided any rubric or grading narrative. After this first round of using both rubrics, we jointly agreed that the 22-criteria form was too detailed. For the second round of assessment, we used the rubric with the five criteria, coinciding with Moskal’s (2000) view that “it is better to have a few meaningful scoring categories than to have many score categories that are difficult or impossible to distinguish” (6). We then separately scored the literature review papers from spring 2002, the experimental group.

### Study for Use of Rubric

In order to test the interrater reliability of the rubric as well as to assess the values of using the rubric as an instructional tool and an objective scoring instrument, we derived a comparison sample from 21 papers from the students in the research class of 2001. These students were not provided the rubric, and their score on the paper was based only on the scoring of the papers without the use of a rubric. The experimental sample was derived from the 29 papers from the students in the spring 2002 research class, all of whom received the rubric at the beginning of the semester and were frequently reminded to refer to the rubric in the development of their papers. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the rubric. The rubric interrater reliability was high, with an Alpha of .90.

The mean for each semester of papers based on rater was calculated. The highest score a paper could receive was 25 (30 minus the 5 points awarded for completing the assignment on time). The mean average score that I gave on papers for spring 2001 (control group) was 15.19, compared to the two English department faculty who averaged 15.76 and 16.20. For the experimental group of 29 papers from the spring 2002 research class, the mean average scores were 16.29, 17.14, and 17.38.

### Table 2. Grading Narrative, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the body of available research in scope, depth, and significance. Classification of materials and methods is complete, flawless, and adequate. Analysis of contradictory conclusions is thorough, and distinctions in measuring, identifying, and defining are generally complete or superficial. A structural pattern for the paper and for paragraphs is generally recognizable, though not consistently logical and clear. Sentence structure and mechanical errors are distracting, as is the use of bloated, meaningless diction and an inappropriate or ineffective format.</td>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Demonstrates a good understanding of the body of available research in scope, depth, and significance. Classification of materials and methods is adequate, though not always complete. Analysis of contradictory conclusions is thorough, and distinctions in measuring, identifying, and defining are generally complete or superficial. A structural pattern for the paper and for paragraphs is generally recognizable, though not always consistently logical and clear. Sentence structure and mechanical errors are distracting, as is the use of bloated, meaningless diction and an inappropriate or ineffective format.</td>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Demonstrates a fair understanding of the body of available research in scope, depth, and significance. Classification of materials and methods is sometimes adequate, and analysis of contradictory conclusions is thorough, and distinctions in measuring, identifying, and defining are generally complete or superficial. A structural pattern for the paper and for paragraphs is generally recognizable, though not always consistently logical and clear. Sentence structure and mechanical errors are distracting, as is the use of bloated, meaningless diction and an inappropriate or ineffective format.</td>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Demonstrates a weak understanding of the body of available research in scope, depth, and significance. Classification of materials and methods is incomplete, flawed, or inadequate. Analysis of contradictory conclusions is superficial, and distinctions in measuring, identifying, and defining are generally incomplete or superficial. A structural pattern for the paper and for paragraphs is generally recognizable, though not consistently logical and clear. Sentence structure and mechanical errors are distracting, as is the use of bloated, meaningless diction and an inappropriate or ineffective format.</td>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Demonstrates an extremely weak understanding of the body of available research in scope, depth, and significance. Classification of materials and methods is incomplete, flawed, or inadequate. Analysis of contradictory conclusions is superficial, and distinctions in measuring, identifying, and defining are generally incomplete or superficial. A structural pattern for the paper and for paragraphs is generally recognizable, though not consistently logical and clear. Sentence structure and mechanical errors are distracting, as is the use of bloated, meaningless diction and an inappropriate or ineffective format.</td>
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An F paper has an extremely weak thesis or none at all. It shows little understanding of the requirements for a literature review because it fails to categorize accurately and appropriately the similarities and differences in materials and methods, it reconciles differences unconvincingly or inadequately, it fails to recognize significant gaps in research, and its shows superficial acquaintance with the body of research. Sequence and organization of ideas is confused, sentence structure and mechanics are distracting, and use of words confuses meaning.
papers, the 2002 semester, the average I gave was 17.24 and the English faculty both gave an average of 14.00.

A Repeated Measures ANOVA was used to explore instructor/course effect. It was determined that there was an instructor main effect and an instructor by class effect. I rated the papers higher in general and rated by course differently than the English faculty—higher for the spring 2002 papers and lower for the spring 2001 papers. These results could reflect my desire for student improvement in performance on this assignment. Suggestions for correcting for this effect are provided in later in this paper, as is an exploration of why this result may have occurred.

Data were also gathered on scores received on the research assignment for three additional semesters—spring '03, fall '03, and spring '04. These data were gathered in order to develop a larger sample size to use for the analysis of individual rubric criterion. I have been the only rater for the last three of the total five semesters of data used for the study. One minor change to the rubric has been made since its inception. In the original rubric, the scoring point values for each criterion consisted of a range from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest point value possible for each and 1 reflective of “poor or absent.” A sixth category, “0,” has been added to reflect when a criterion is totally absent, and “1” has been left to reflect poor work performance. It was not logical to award a point when the student had totally neglected to include a portion of the required work, such as a conclusion.

In comparing the mean of total points scored on the literature review assignment for all five semesters on which data have been gathered, I found that the lowest mean score was for the semester without the use of the rubric. For all other semesters the mean score is similar (2001=15.19, 2002=18.24, spring 2003=20.59, fall 2003=18.18, spring 2004=19.71). A T-test indicated that there is a significant difference in means between the semester when the rubric was not used as an instructional tool and the group of subsequent papers when it was used ($\bar{X}_1 = 15.2, \bar{X}_2 = 19.1, t(134) = -3.667, p < .000$).

A total of 135 papers were assessed using the five-criterion rubric over the total five-semester period from spring '01 through spring '04. Criterion 4, conclusion, received the lowest mean score and criterion 3, writing mechanics, received the highest. Why this occurred will need to be explored in a future study; however, one can speculate on two possible reasons. The brief description of the criterion may be insufficient in guiding the students to provide the appropriate information. A second possible explanation could be that students have an inaccurate or insufficient understanding of the components needed for an effective conclusion. In other words, they have not previously developed this particular writing skill, even if the student had previously completed one or both of the English courses required of all majors. Our research indicated that 88 percent had completed the 100 level English course before taking the research class, and 66 percent had completed both the beginning- and advanced-level English courses before enroll-
ing in the research class. Table 3 provides descriptive analysis for each criterion based on the papers for all five semesters.

**Discussion**

The literature review papers for semesters when students were given the rubric received higher scores than the semester when students had not been given the rubric, although the same rubric was used to score the assignment for all semesters. This result would indicate that the rubric assists the students in performing better on this particular assignment. Therefore, the answer to the question posed in the beginning of this paper is a conditional yes: student papers are better, as measured with higher scores, if the students have a rubric that they can use from the beginning of the semester in developing their papers than if no rubric is used for the same written assignment. A possible method by which to tease out the cause for this effect would be to replicate this study.

It is possible that the scores are averaging as high as they are because I have learned how to use the rubric as a tool of student learning. I do not only give the rubric to the students, I also discuss it with them, I answer student questions about the rubric in class so that all students in attendance have the same information, and I repeatedly remind them to use the rubric in developing their papers. As Soles (2001) put it, “[S]hared rubrics empower students, they urge students to become active participants in the writing process, and they substantiate the connections among teaching, learning, and assessment” (14). In providing the students with the rubric early in the course as well as repeatedly encouraging their use of it in assessing their own papers, it is likely that the students are better able to understand the assignment requirements.

An exploration of assignment grade and course grade provides some interesting results. The average points scored on the paper (18.54), equivalent to a grade of C at 74 percent of total points possible, is lower than the average course grade of B at 3.00. This would indicate that, on average, students gain their points throughout the rest of the semester in a combination of performance on the other two writing assignments and the exams.

**Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Rubric Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Mean (n=134)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Development and Organization</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Summarization</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Writing Mechanics</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conclusion</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Presentation</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over the past four years, I have done a great deal of reflective thinking about this course, including my style of teaching, the use of a research proposal as an assignment, the use of the rubric as both an instructional tool and an assessment instrument, my provision of out-of-class time assistance, the methods by which I provide feedback to the students, both verbal and written, and student use and retention of the information they learn through this course. This last is possible because I often have these students again in upper-division courses that refer back to research concepts in the exploration of content specific material, such as policy analysis.

The writing of this manuscript has also caused me to reflect on the course in general. All of the faculty in my program have had numerous discussions over the years about the goals and objectives of the research course: What do we want students to learn, and what skills do we want them to develop? We have agreed that the major objectives of the course should focus on three specific areas: (1) demonstrate an ability to critically analyze, in written form, research in the topic area; (2) develop an understanding of research methodology; and (3) demonstrate this understanding by applying this knowledge to a research topic of the student’s choice by designing a study. I designed the three assignments, explained earlier in this paper, to assist me in assessing student outcomes on these three objectives. I also used the first assignment to assist me in evaluating the students’ level of writing proficiency. My thought was that the assignment would not only be a means by which to relate content material to an applied skill but would also be a means for me to determine whether or not a student had specific challenges in the area of writing mechanics. I believe that it is important to correct for any deficiencies in writing abilities early in students’ academic careers.

When I first taught the class, I had expectations that students would already be solidly grounded in the principles of writing, including the development of a thesis, the summarization of material, writing mechanics, and the development of conclusions, because they would have completed the introductory English composition course and some students would have completed the second-level composition course as well. What I rapidly discovered was that the students’ performance in these writing areas fell far short of my expectations. It did not make sense to me to change the writing requirements for the literature review because students did not do well on it; I knew I had to find ways to improve their writing performance while at the same time helping them learn content-specific information in the area of research.

The rubric has been changed very little over the past four years. The only major revision was to change the scoring options to include 0 for information absent rather than have a score of 1 indicative of poor or absent. However, my style of teaching has changed as a result of my involvement in this project. In general, each year I find I focus more on giving meaningful and constructive feedback to the students, not just through the use of the rubric but in my written comments.
throughout their papers. I also have found that, in class, I am providing more detailed instructions, verbally, on the expectations of performance as well as the reasons why I use the assignments I do. More and more I try to link the purpose of the research proposal to their overall understanding of research on public affairs topics. Through my involvement with the two English faculty members in the development of the rubric, I discovered the many benefits of interdisciplinary instruction as well as collaborative effort in designing ways to improve the writing skills of our majors. For example, by using the rubric categories for analyzing writing performance and conducting the study over a number of semesters, I have pinpointed specific areas that I am now working on with the English department, designing ways to improve student performance. I do not believe that this depth of reflection would have occurred without my involvement in this project and my development of the study, the analysis of the data, and the writing of this manuscript.

Limitations
Although the results of this study lead to some interesting conclusions, some limitations need to be recognized. For one thing, the raters knew which courses’ papers they were scoring. This could possibly have contributed to a bias, particularly on my part. Second, the students’ previous performance in writing assignments could actually be a significant causal factor for performance on the research assignment. However, data on performance on previous writing assignments or for grades in previous writing classes were not gathered.

Directions for Future Research
Student input on their use of the rubric could be beneficial. A suggested course of action is to get student feedback in two specific areas: (1) Ask how useful the students believe the rubric is in the development of the literature review assignment, and (2) ask if the wording used on the rubric needs to be revised in anyway for ease in understanding and application.

A second direction for future studies of the use of a rubric could entail a comparison of self-rated scores to instructor-rated scores. Using the rubric, students could be asked to judge their own work and to hand in their ratings with the paper, a suggestion made by others such as Huba and Freed (2000). It would be important to first determine the protocol of gathering this information from the students. It would be better if the students’ self-evaluations depicted on the rubric were collected separately from the papers and were not viewed by the instructor until after the instructor scored the papers.

A third possible direction for future study would be a more detailed examination of the scoring differences in the five criteria. As noted earlier, the conclusion section received the lowest overall scores. The wording used in the rubric that gives the students guidance in developing the conclusion and the basis for scor-
ing may be flawed. The lower scores received in this area could also be a reflection of the level of understanding and writing skill development gained in previous English courses. A future study could use a similar rubric, with appropriate wording changes made to the criteria for the conclusion, and determine whether students perform better. As noted previously, student feedback could also be helpful in determining ways to improve performance in this area.

Fourth, it could also prove useful to add grades received in the required English course(s) as a variable on which to gather data. In this way, relationships between performance on previous writing assignments and the research assignment could be examined.

**Conclusion**

I learned many things through this study. For one, it takes a great deal of time and thought to develop a rubric that both the students and the instructor can use meaningfully. It is also very helpful to have the input of colleagues of another discipline. In my particular case, based on the type of assignment in the studied course, it was most logical to include the assistance of faculty from the English department.

Perhaps most importantly, I discovered the many benefits of using a well-developed and well-structured rubric in assessing student performance on written assignments. First, it helped clarify assignment expectations for the students. Second, it gave the students and the instructor a basis for discussion while in the process of completing the assignment rather than at the end. During these discussions, the rubric was used in clarifying what was needed in the summaries as well as facilitating the discussion of organization and of the writing format required (APA style). Third, the rubric was useful in focusing the student as well as in focusing the instructor’s assessment. Fourth, since I began using the rubric, I have received very few student complaints about scores. If I attach completed rubric to the papers and make comments throughout the paper itself, students can more readily determine the basis for a loss of points. Even with students who have chosen to dispute their scores, discussions have been much less argumentative and more directed at individual student development. Finally, the process of developing a rubric, compiling the data used for the study, and analyzing the results assisted reflective thought on the scoring of written assignments, the communication of expectations to the students, and teaching strategies in general.

Admittedly, scoring written assignments is always going to have an element of subjectivity that is unpreventable because of the nature of the type of assignment. However, a well-developed rubric goes a long way toward removing the overt objectivity of assigning one score, which often lacks clarity on matching expectations in particular areas to assignment performance. The rubric provides an opportunity to provide a quantitative measurement to what is inherently a qualitative assessment.
Integrating Writing and Research Skills: Development and Testing of a Rubric

NOTES
1. Rubrics that can be used in a variety of protocols are available in the literature. See, for example, Anson and Dannels; Higgins, 2003; Huba and Freed, 2000; Kist, 2001; Koliba, 2004; Meyerson and Adams, 2003; Montgomery, 2000; Moskal and Leydens, 2000; Simon and Forgette-Giroux, 2001; Stevens and Levi, 2005; Walvoord and Anderson, 1998; and Wilson and Onwuegbuzie, 1999; to name but a few.
2. Students majoring in criminal justice, public affairs, health services management, general studies, and a variety of other disciplines take the course. It is cross-listed in both the criminal justice and public affairs disciplines as a required course.
3. A copy of the instructions for all three of the written assignments as well as any of the instruments developed in connection with this study is available upon request.

REFERENCES
Integrating Writing and Research Skills: Development and Testing of a Rubric


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The valuable contributions of the English Department faculty involved in the development of the rubric are greatly appreciated.
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Intermediate Theory: The Missing Link in Successful Student Scholarship

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Texas State University

Abstract
Since 1998, five Texas State University students’ capstone papers have won the Pi Alpha Alpha master’s student paper award. This success rate is attributed to students’ mastery of the art of building and using intermediate theory or conceptual frameworks in the early stages of the Applied Research Project. This article introduces the notion of micro-conceptual frameworks and explains how students use them to connect all aspects of empirical inquiry—problem definition, purpose, literature review, methodology, data collection, and analysis. These conceptual frameworks act like maps that give coherence to the enterprise, and they are a critical missing link in successful student empirical research.

Since 1998, the capstone papers of students at Texas State University have won the Pi Alpha Alpha master’s student paper award five times. The papers are successful because students have mastered the art of building and using intermediate theory or conceptual frameworks. In this article, we introduce the notion of micro-conceptual frameworks and explain how students use them to connect all aspects of empirical inquiry—problem definition, purpose, literature review, methodology, data collection, and analysis. These conceptual frameworks, which act like maps that give coherence to the enterprise, are a critical missing link in successful student empirical research.

Our MPA students learn about the conceptual elements of empirical research as they prepare for their Applied Research Project (ARP), which is written in a two-course sequence. The first class (POSI 5335 Problems in Research Methodology) is a research methods class that emphasizes the conceptual elements
of research. Students are required to find their topic, specify a research purpose, write a literature review, construct a conceptual framework, operationalize the conceptual framework, and present a prospectus. In the oral presentation of the prospectus they are required to share their research purpose and construct the two conceptual framework tables that are the focus of this article. The first table links their conceptual framework to the literature and the second table operationalizes the conceptual framework.

In the second course (POSI 5397 Applied Research Project), the students act independently. They are expected to submit a written prospectus (with the purpose statement and conceptual framework tables included), collect, organize and analyze the data, write their paper, and defend it in an oral examination. After the prospectus receives faculty approval, it is submitted to our Institutional Review Board. The tables used in the prospectus facilitate institutional review. The conceptual framework tables developed for the prospectus are included in the literature review and methodology chapters of the final paper. The operationalization table directs the organization of the results chapter, and a summary table drawn from the conceptual framework is generally found in the conclusion chapter. Given the importance of the conceptual framework tables in the overall process, this paper emphasizes how the tables are constructed, how they make theory more explicit, and how they act as links that connect all aspects of the research process. Examples of student work illustrate these connections.

**Philosophic Approach to Theory**

Our approach to teaching about the role of theory in empirical research is explicitly guided by the ideas of Abraham Kaplan and John Dewey. Kaplan’s (1964) sense of methodology incorporates a logic-in-use that focuses on the “problem at hand” and carefully considers conceptual aspects of empirical research. Dewey’s instrumental view of theory is particularly useful because it treats theory as a tool to structure inquiry. When theory is approached as a tool (rather than truth), MPA student/practitioners are better able to see theory’s relevance and usefulness. Our students learn about the “theory as tool” approach to empirical inquiry as they are faced with the challenge of writing their capstone projects—the Applied Research Project.

Kaplan also maintains that the traditional “hypothetico-deductive” method of inquiry associated with behavioral science methodology (and logical empiricism) is problematic because “most of the important incidents in the drama of science are enacted behind the scenes” (Kaplan, 1964, 10). Kaplan views theory as too often in the “shadowy background” or “ghostly in appearance” and says that the conceptual elements of methodology should be “exposed to sunlight” (Kaplan, 1964, 268). Dewey describes this phase of methodology as the “twilight zone of inquiry” (Dewey, 1916, 174). The logic-in-use of Dewey and Kaplan emphasizes the “behind the scenes” elements of inquiry such as procedures for forming
Intermediate Theory: The Missing Link in Successful Student Scholarship

concepts and hypotheses (Kaplan, 1964, 23). The “behind the scenes” elements of inquiry can and should be “exposed to the sunlight.”

Theory and Practice

One of the unique facets of Kaplan and Dewey’s approach is the extraordinarily tight connection between theory and practice. Theory is used to organize the exploration of the problem at hand. Dewey and Kaplan’s key insight is that, without the problem there would be no need for theory. Conceptual frameworks are connected to outcomes or problem resolution because they aid in making judgment. Theory includes the “logical instruments” of reaching judgment (Dewey, 1938, 283). Dewey’s common sense approach to theory and empirical inquiry has appeal to concrete, practice oriented, student/practitioners. It also gives them a new appreciation of the role and function of theory in management and policy.

Because micro-conceptual frameworks are applied to the problem at hand, they guide data collection and interpretation. Thus, these frameworks guide the most practical, mechanical, elements of empirical inquiry. For example, questionnaire design, interview questions, and content analysis coding sheets should be guided by theory. Choice of statistical tests as well as variable construction should be guided by theory. Our approach attempts to expose these connections to the “sunlight.” In the process, theory is connected to data collection and interpretation. Kaplan (1964, 268) points out that

every theory serves, in part, as a research directive. Theory is useful because it guides the collection of data and their subsequent analysis, by showing us beforehand where the data are to be fitted, and what we are to make of them when we get them.... Without a theory, however provisional or loosely formulated, there is only a miscellany of observations, having no significance.

For Kaplan and Dewey, theory emerges as a tool to address an immediate practical problem and is most evident in the collecting, organizing, and interpreting of empirical evidence (both qualitative and quantitative). Theory enables analysis and synthesis because its structure provides a big picture and a little picture simultaneously.

Concepts and theories have a role in inquiry as “prescriptions for organizing the materials of experience so as to be able to go about our business” (Kaplan, 1964, 46). A theory conforms to the facts and it is a way of looking at the facts. “Theory must fit God’s world, but in an important sense it creates a world of its own” (Kaplan, 1964, 309). The tool metaphor, once more, applies. Clearly, tools are of this world and they exist to solve problems; nevertheless, in the process of application, they also transform the world. It should be noted that conceptual frameworks are out in the open and are still conjectural or hypothetical. They are
not truth; rather, a systematic way (still subject to reason) to organize inquiry (Kaplan, 1964, 296).

For John Dewey, inquiry involves transformations that are achieved by means of operations of two kinds…. One kind of operations deals with ideational or conceptual subject-matter…. The other…is made up of activities involving the techniques and organs of observations (Dewey, 1938, 117).

This paper deals with ways to enable the transformations of inquiry, linking the “conceptual subject-matter” to the “techniques and organs of observations.”

The student’s choice of the conceptual framework (which tool?) is directed by the nature of the problem. But how do microconceptual frameworks help organize the observed world and connect it to the research problem?

Dewey (1938, 402) compares conceptual frameworks to maps. Maps are problem-solving tools. They help navigation through experience or the experiential world. They also represent and abstract from reality. When accurate, maps enable navigation within reality.

Like maps, micro conceptual frameworks in empirical inquiry must have a directive function: “[w]hen the directive function of the map is left out of consideration it must be said that no map is ‘true’” (Dewey, 1938, 402). True maps produce “consequences that are intended to be served by the map” (Dewey 1938, 403).

Dewey points out that “problems are constantly changing and therefore require conceptual tools which must be constantly refashioned to meet the new demands” (Flowers and Murphy, 1977, 812). Hence, there are two kinds of tools (micro frameworks), those that can be pulled out of the tool box (ready made) and those that must be created. When students engage in empirical research, they must first identify a problem and then search for a theory or tool to help connect the problem to observed data. The micro-framework can already exist (pick a tool from the tool box) or it may be improvised (make the tool).

This approach emphasizes the connective function of conceptual frameworks. These frameworks help students connect forward into the problem and give direction on how to collect and analyze data. They also have a connective function backward to the literature and larger theoretical frameworks (i.e., neo-classical economics, organization theory). Students are expected to justify their framework by connecting it to the scholarly literature (or an existing public affairs framework).

A literature review enables the student to get to know the topic, connect the larger literature to their work experience, and refine the research question or problem. The literature review may also reveal where previous inquiry has stopped. Conceptual frameworks are built upon the premise and practice of a careful, thoughtful, and reflective review of the literature. Students are thus expected to draw upon the wisdom and insights of the literature and their experi-
ence to develop a plan or map to guide their inquiry. A good map helps one reach an unknown destination more quickly and with less anxiety.

**Classifying and Nesting Micro Frameworks**

Unlike most approaches to methodology that place conceptual frameworks in the “twilight region” of inquiry (Kaplan, 1964, 268), we give microconceptual frameworks names and classify them into five concrete categories. In the early stages of problem formation and conceptualization, the five types of microconceptual frameworks are linked to a “research purpose” in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microconceptual Framework</th>
<th>Research Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Working Hypotheses</td>
<td>Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Categories</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Practical Ideal Type</td>
<td>Gauging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Models of Operation Research</td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Formal Hypotheses</td>
<td>Explanation/Prediction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the late 1980s, the faculty realized that our student papers lacked conceptual coherence. This problem often seemed intractable. Students just did not understand how to make their papers analytical, and we were not effective at communicating how to enhance their conceptual and analytical nature. The critical insight occurred when we realized that most social science research is implicitly explanatory (or hypothesis-driven), while public administration research was often exploratory or descriptive. If hypotheses were the framework for explanatory research, were there different frameworks for description or exploration? Categories were the obvious framework for the descriptive purpose. Dewey’s working hypotheses seemed a perfect fit for exploration.

Further, maybe a practice-oriented field like public affairs had research purposes/frameworks not found in social science methods texts (see Babbie, 2004). Here it became obvious that decision-making and models of operation research could be paired. Hypotheses worked for impact evaluation—but what about process evaluation? Was there a systematic way to gauge whether program components made sense (or were working in practice)? Could program processes be gauged against ideal criteria? Thus, the gauging research purpose was paired with the practical ideal type conceptual framework.

Of course, before a framework can even be considered, students face the challenges of finding a topic, then narrowing a topic so that the research question can fit one of the research purposes. The method we use to address this aspect of the course (*Step by Step* notebook) is more fully developed in several scholarly sources and is not the subject of this paper.

Once the students can identify their research purpose, the conceptual challenge is simplified because they can name the framework they are searching for. The
naming makes the search more concrete. They are better able to decipher which literature and life experiences are important. The task of organizing inquiry is easier and more productive.

Once the frameworks and purposes were paired, it became obvious that the research technique (questionnaire, interviews) and statistics were easily linked. Table 1 demonstrates how we link research purpose, framework, method, and statistics.

Like most courses, POSI 5335 has evolved since it was first introduced in 1991. Table 1, for example, was not formalized until 1997. And it was not until 2000 that we started to require students to construct the conceptual framework tables at the prospectus stage. Once the research purpose is formalized and the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Purpose (1)</th>
<th>Research Question (2)</th>
<th>Micro-Conceptual Framework (3)</th>
<th>Research Technique/Methodology (4)</th>
<th>Statistical Techniques (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploration</strong></td>
<td>Anything goes: what, when, where, why, who, how, or any combination of the above</td>
<td>Working hypotheses</td>
<td>Usually qualitative techniques: field research, structured interviews, focus groups, document/archival record analysis</td>
<td>Qualitative evidence may not be statistical But anything goes Any type of statistical analysis possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>What</td>
<td>Descriptive categories</td>
<td>Survey and content analysis</td>
<td>Simple descriptive statistics: Mean median, mode frequency distribution, percentages, t-statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gauging</strong></td>
<td>How close is process/policy to an ideal or standard? How can x be improved?</td>
<td>Practical ideal type</td>
<td>Case study, survey, content analysis, document analysis, structured interviews</td>
<td>Simple descriptive statistics: Mean median, mode frequency distribution, percentages, t-statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision making</strong></td>
<td>What is the best decision? Which approach?</td>
<td>Models of operations research</td>
<td>Cost benefit analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, linear programming, decision tree, etc.</td>
<td>Quantitative techniques of operations research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation</strong></td>
<td>Why</td>
<td>Formal hypothesis: if x then y</td>
<td>Usually quantitative, experimental and quasi experimental design, survey, existing data analysis</td>
<td>t-statistics, correlation, chi-square, analysis of variance, simple and multiple regression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
type of framework recognized, students search for the unique elements of their framework. These unique elements are justified by the scholarly literature on this subject. Requiring students to construct these tables has led to better Applied Research Projects and has made the projects easier to supervise.

Ideally, the required “conceptual framework table” connects column 1 (research purpose) and column 3 (micro-conceptual framework) of Table 1. The required “operationalization table” connects column 3 (micro-conceptual framework) and column 4 (research technique/methodology) and sometimes column 5 (statistics). Hence, theory or the conceptual framework is the centerpiece of all applied research projects.

Once we are satisfied with the operationalization table, it is clear how the ARP will be organized, and consistent supervision does not require a good memory. Hence, the remainder of this paper focuses on explaining the frameworks and illustrating the conceptual framework tables that structure every Texas State ARP.

It should be noted that these frameworks are developed to deal with the complexity of real world problems. Research questions are not answered with a simple yes or no. For example, Rachael Jeffers (2003) wanted to better understand the nature of development sprawl and study city managers’ attitudes toward sprawl. After extensive reading and reflection on her experiences with city managers, Jeffers focused the investigation by examining how sprawl influenced city finance and service provision, annexation policy, and regional government policies. Because her research was preliminary, she developed three working hypotheses (and a series of subhypotheses) that were categorized by the criteria above.

Valerie LaCour Francois (2004) was asked by her supervisor to analyze the City of Austin’s employee grievance procedures. Francois was expected to make recommendations to improve the current system. She used a practical ideal type framework to identify key components of grievance procedures found in the literature; this allowed her to compare the existing system with a standard developed from the literature using case study techniques. Keiji Shirota (2003), a young accountant, was interested in investigating how public finance officials in local government assessed the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) new reporting requirements as summarized in Statement 34. Shirota used categories (adequacy and accountability, usefulness, accuracy of representation, cost of implementation) as the basis of his empirical investigation (the source of his survey questions).

Without the knowledge that they would be required to develop and present a conceptual framework and operationalization table, students usually avoid the challenging work of conceptualizing. Both tables present unique challenges. The conceptual framework table requires theorizing. In the operationalization table, students are expected to show how their conceptual framework moves from the abstract to measurement and modes of evidence collection. In other words, they move to the real world of public administration practice.
Exploratory or preliminary research is linked with the micro-conceptual framework “working hypotheses,” which signal that conceptualization is in its preliminary stages. The working hypothesis is a pivotal concept in Dewey’s (1938) theory of inquiry. Working hypotheses are a “provisional, working means of advancing investigation”; they lead to the discovery of other critical facts (Dewey, 1938, 142). This is the type of theory that Kaplan (1964, 268) would describe as “provisional or loosely formatted.” Although the working hypothesis is preliminary, we still emphasize that it should, like all hypotheses, be in the form of a statement of expectations. Further, it must be possible to collect evidence that either supports or fails to support the expectation. Further, working hypotheses (like formal hypotheses) are never proven. They are supported with empirical evidence.

Given the preliminary nature of exploratory research, working hypotheses are a micro-conceptual framework that is usually “invented.” The working hypotheses are invented using information from the literature and the student’s experience. In practice, most students use broad categories to classify working hypotheses, and then a series of subhypotheses within the broad category are used to connect to the data or evidence (the link to experience). Working hypotheses direct inquiry because they help to establish the connection between the research question and the types of evidence used to test the hypothesis. This link is formalized in the operationalization table.

Examples of Working Hypotheses Tables

Michelle Romero’s ARP is a good example of how working hypotheses are used to organize and propel inquiry. Romero worked for Texas State Representative Jim Solis (D-Harlingen) and had been involved with the legislative side of performance measurement. This led her to the topic of performance measurement and a desire to understand how the Texas State agency leaders viewed the performance measurement system. After a careful literature review, she developed the following purpose statement: “The purpose of this research is to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of state agency leaders toward utilization of the current performance measurement system in Texas state government” (Romero, 2004, 5). She developed six working hypotheses to capture the many dimensions of a performance measurement system. The working hypotheses dealt with the broad subject areas: communication, quality of information received, resources available to implement, disposition to implement, bureaucratic structure, and utilization of the measures. Table 2 illustrates the first two working hypotheses found in Michelle’s actual conceptual framework table. (See Romero, 2004, 45-47, for the entire conceptual framework table).

The conceptual framework table is usually found at the end of the literature review chapter. It is also used to structure much of the narrative of the chapter. It serves as a type of outline, with the literature already identified. Each working hy-
hypothesis (and subhypotheses) is explained, developed, and defended under separate subheadings that correspond to the key concept in the working hypothesis.

Since Romero’s purpose was to “investigate the attitudes and perceptions of state agency leaders,” she needed to develop either interview questions or survey questions. Michelle was interested in generalizing to a large group of agency leaders, so she decided on survey research. She used the working hypotheses to develop her questionnaire.

The operationalization table (Table 3) shows how her questionnaire items corresponded to the working hypotheses. Our rule of thumb is that each subhypothesis should have at least one questionnaire item. Romero used a Likert Scale in the actual questionnaire (see Romero, 2004, 56-57, for the complete operationalization table).

Romero structured her results chapter around the conceptual framework. The chapter subheadings consist of the key concept imbedded in the working hypothesis (e.g., communication, information). Using the operationalization table as a guide, Romero summarized the results in tables and then in the narrative section within the corresponding subheading. She analyzed the three questionnaire items under “communication” found in the operationalization table. Table 4 is one of six tables that correspond to the conceptual framework found in Romero’s results chapter (Romero, 2004, 61).

Table 2. Part of Michelle Romero’s Conceptual Framework Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Hypotheses</th>
<th>Scholarly Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Table 3. Part of Michelle Romero’s Operationalization Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Hypotheses</th>
<th>Survey Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WH1: Effective communication is evident in the performance measurement system.</td>
<td>The Texas performance measurement system is developed with clear communication from stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH1a: Strategic plans are clearly communicated.</td>
<td>Performance measures are developed with a direct linkage to agency strategic plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH1b: Performance information guidance is clearly communicated</td>
<td>Staff using performance measures receive clear guidance information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH2: The performance measurement system operates with good information.</td>
<td>The Texas performance measurement system operates with good information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH2a: Performance information is reliable and accurate</td>
<td>My agency’s performance measures are based on reliable information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH2b: Performance information is monitored for compliance</td>
<td>My agency’s performance measures are monitored to ensure data validity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4. Example of Michelle Romero’s Results Tables (Effective Communication)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Hypothesis</th>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Agree &amp; Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WH1: Effective communication is evident in the performance measurement system.</td>
<td>The Texas performance measurement system is developed with clear communication.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH1a: Strategic plans are clearly communicated.</td>
<td>Performance measures are developed with linkages to strategic plans.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH1b: Performance information guidance is clearly communicated</td>
<td>Staff receives clear guidance information.</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although working hypotheses are associated with research at its early stages, their flexibility allows for the most sophisticated, complex research questions and design. Three of the five Pi Alpha Alpha papers used working hypotheses as their framework.\textsuperscript{14}

**Categories**

Categories or classification is the easiest and most basic micro-conceptual framework to see or use. Categories are linked to the descriptive purpose and are paired with “what” questions. Classification is a powerful conceptual tool that is often not seen by practitioners. Raising the students’ consciousness about classification as an organizing tool is a major benefit of this approach.

Kaplan (1964, 50) discusses the process of conceptualizing associated with categories:

In this process the things studied are classified and analyzed: several things are grouped together and particular things assigned to the several groups to which they belong.... Things are grouped together because they resemble one another.

Dewey likens categorization to sorting like things in bins. The categories are labels for the bins. Dewey also locates generality in the activity of producing inquiry, in operations performed with a view toward particular problems or questions: “Sorting is done on the basis of need to draw certain inferences to solve certain problems to construct or produce instruments that will be effective in the resolution of experienced difficulties” (Hickman 1990, 129).

Through the literature review, students are expected to start finding “what” aspects of a phenomenon they want to describe. The complex and multifaceted nature of public management and policy dictates a descriptive framework that is often multifaceted. The literature review should also help them find family resemblances and labels for the bins. When students find existing ways to label the bins, they are using previously constructed tools. When the literature hints at ways to describe a phenomenon, they must invent the bin labels.

For some reason, however, students are often reluctant to invent the labels; the explicit challenge of inventing a descriptive framework requires a degree of intellectual independence that makes them uncomfortable. This is ironic, because managers are stronger if they can recognize that some kind of abstract framework helps to organize a problem and that they may be responsible for the framework development. People who own problems may need to build tools. Student Erin McKinnery (2004), for example, used index cards to identify aspects of the problem she was considering. She then spent several days sorting the index cards into groups that became her larger categories.
Description is often chosen as a research purpose when students discover that basic information is missing from the literature. Rebecca Anderson (2003), who was interested in domestic partner policy, discovered that formal domestic partner policy could include a variety of benefits, but a systematic inventory of the kinds of benefits offered was missing from the literature. Rebecca’s purpose statement follows:

The purpose of this research is to describe domestic partner benefits in state, county and city government. While the literature indicates many possible components of these policies, it does not provide a particular framework to describe the policies or any detail [about] which elements are part of existing policies. The intent of this research is to develop a framework from the literature and then measure actual policies in use by government entities for the presence of those elements using descriptive categories (Anderson 2003, 3).

**Practical Ideal Type**

The practical ideal type conceptual framework corresponds to the research purposes gauging. We realized that most social science research is not designed to incorporate normative judgment or to be applied to immediate practical problems. Public administrators often use research findings to make recommendations to improve programs; in other words, they are asked to gauge the effectiveness of program processes. One way to gauge the efficacy of program processes is to develop criteria for this judgment and then to collect empirical evidence to contrast the reality of the program against the criteria.

We have named these criteria the practical ideal type. In other words, the criteria are the components of a nearly ideal process. We use the term practical to indicate that the criteria or model components are not perfect but are subject to revision. The practical ideal type is just the best components that the student could find after engaging in a careful review of the literature, tempered by his or her experience.

Unlike the “what” research question associated with description, gauging research asks, “what should”—that is, how close is process x to the ideal or standard? The research purpose is to gauge what should be done to improve an administrative process.

The practical ideal type conceptual framework is like a combination of categories and working hypotheses. Descriptive categories do not contain an explicit normative direction. The categories of the ideal type do, and thus can be treated as statements of expectation (or working hypotheses) that direct evidence collection—and can be supported or not be supported by the evidence.

The beauty of the practical ideal type is that, when evidence is collected, students are able to make recommendations and assess strengths and weaknesses.
The practical ideal type is a micro-conceptual framework equipped to address issues raised by formative program evaluation.

The search for best practices is akin to the search for a practical ideal type; the best practice is what should be in place. Practical is the key term for this micro-conceptual framework. In other words, the ideal is itself under construction. The framework represents a starting point and is itself subject to revision.” Dewey (1938, 303) stresses that “ideals...are not intended to be themselves realized but are meant to direct our course to realization of potentialities” in experience. Kaplan (1964, 83) describes an ideal type as a construct; it “specifies something with which the real situation of action is compared and surveyed for the explication of certain of its significant components.” To sanctify the ideal and to disparage the actual because it fails to comply with the ideal misses the point.

A vision is not a scene but it can enable us to construct scenes which would not exist without it…. To ignore or depreciate ideal because it cannot be literally translated into existence is to acquiesce not only to things ‘as they are’—as is something said—but also to things ‘as they are not’ because all things that are have potential (Dewey, 1938, 304).

Practical ideal types are generally organized by category. Clearly, the practical ideal type must have strong ties to the broader literature. ARPs that include well-crafted practical ideal types are easy to supervise. The practical ideal type directs the search for evidence as well as the organization of the results. It also provides a straightforward way to interpret the meaning of the findings.

Practical ideal types provide benchmarks and/or best practices that enable the manager/researcher to understand and improve reality. For example, NASPAA uses standards to assess master’s degree programs (ideal type—or in the case of NASPAA, minimum acceptable standards). Existing standards—laws, regulations—can be viewed as ready-made conceptual frameworks. A key point is that practicing public administrators are confronted with ready-made conceptual frameworks similar to the practical ideal type in many aspects of their job.

An Example of the Practical Ideal Type. Sharon Ley, who worked for the Texas State Bar Association, became interested in succession planning and particularly in the Fellows Program, a pilot succession-planning program used at the Texas State Bar. Ley was interested in assessing the program and potentially offering suggestions that could improve it. She developed a three-pronged purpose statement, the first element of which dealt with building the ideal type model itself:

The purpose of this applied research project is threefold. First, it will describe the ideal characteristics of an effective succession-planning program based on the literature. Second, it will assess the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program Pilot Project using the practical ideal
type characteristics. Finally, the project will develop strategies for improving the effectiveness of the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program (Ley, 2002, 7).

Ley’s formal conceptual framework is found in Table 5 (Ley, 2002, 27), where she identifies both the broad categories of an idea succession plan such as “top management support” and “needs-driven assessment.” Within each category are elements that further define the its meaning. For example, top management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal Type Categories</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top management participation &amp; support</td>
<td>Rothwell, 2001; Walker, 1998; Getty, 1993; Shah et al., 2001; Gratton &amp; Syrett, 1990; Nowack, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Board, CEO, and senior management support and participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Open discussion of potential employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Willingness to hire across division lines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- External benchmarking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assessment of core competencies of positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide formal professional development opportunities</td>
<td>Rothwell, 2001; Bard &amp; Moore, 2000; DiMattia, 2000; Delahoussaye, 2001(a); Foster, 2000; Barker, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Orient potential leaders with organizational environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Formal mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Access to leadership development seminars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on individual attention</td>
<td>Rothwell, 2001; Spoor, 1993; Shah et al., 2001; Gratton &amp; Syrett, 1990; Nowack, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Listen to employee’s goals/desires</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Individuals make training choices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emphasize growth in qualities to take employees beyond the next rung in the ladder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated responsibility</td>
<td>Rothwell, 2001; Getty, 1993; Shah et al., 2001; Gratton &amp; Syrett, 1990; Nowack, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Coordinator who keeps plan current</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create computerized models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dedicated funds/budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Systematic approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Keeps track of future needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extends to all levels of organization</td>
<td>Schall, 1997; Walker, 1998; Getty, 1993; Sogunro, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify talent at all levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Open communication and knowledge of plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of strategic plan</td>
<td>Rothwell, 2001; Gratton &amp; Syrett, 1990; Foster, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strategic plan determines which positions will be in succession plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have written purpose statement and measurable goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
support translates to 1) board and CEO support; 2) open discussion of potential employees; and 3) willingness to hire across division lines. Like the other conceptual framework tables, Table 5 also includes the sources Ley used to construct and defend each category of the practical ideal type model. Instead of a literature review chapter, her second chapter, “Succession Planning Model,” was devoted to constructing the model. The categories in Table 5 made up key subheadings in the chapter. The references listed were used to explain and justify the components of the model in the narrative.

Ley used a case study technique to achieve the second purpose, assessing the State Bar Fellows Program using the practical ideal type. Table 6 illustrates a portion of her operationalization table (Ley, 2002, 37-38). She identifies the method used (document analysis, focused interviews, and participant observation). She lists the evidence needed to support the hypothesis and the data sources (types of documents and whom she would interview). The table also guides Ley’s methodology chapter discussion. For example, Ley discusses the single case study as well as the techniques (e.g., document analysis), their strengths and weaknesses, sampling issues associated with each technique, and the biases she expects.

Again, the results chapter is organized by the operationalization table. Ley used the categories in the ideal type model as subheadings, and then discussed the findings for each type of research technique (e.g. document analysis, focused interviews). She summarized her findings in tables at the end of the section (see Table 7; Ley, 2002, 46).

Table 6. A Portion of Ley’s Operationalization Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal Type Categories</th>
<th>Research Methods</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top management participation and support</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Board recognizes need for program.</td>
<td>Board meeting minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Board, CEO, and Senior Management support and participation</em></td>
<td>Focused interviews</td>
<td>CEO displays verbal and written support of program</td>
<td>Senior management meeting notes, email messages from executive director to division heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Open discussion of potential employees</em></td>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Program is discussed at senior management meetings.</td>
<td>HR promotion records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Willingness to hire across division lines</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Existence of written policy of hiring/promoting across divisions.</td>
<td>Interviews with senior management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Top Management Participation and Support—Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal Type Categories</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Research Method</th>
<th>Evidence Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top management participation &amp; support</td>
<td>Board recognizes need for program.</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Board, CEO and Senior Management support and participation</td>
<td>CEO displays verbal and written support of program.</td>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Open discussion of potential employees</td>
<td>Program is discussed at senior management meetings.</td>
<td>Focused interviews</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Willingness to hire across division lines</td>
<td>Existence of written policy of hiring/ promoting across divisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the close of the results chapter, Ley had successfully addressed her second stated purpose: “assess the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program Pilot Project using the practical ideal type…. In the conclusion chapter she addressed her third purpose: “develop strategies for improving the effectiveness of the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program.” She used the model she developed earlier and her findings to develop these strategies. Recommendations tend to fall out of the model fairly easily; in fact, when the evidence suggests that practice is far from the ideal, recommendations that move the organization closer to the ideal are self-evident. For example, Sharon found that top managers at the Texas State Bar were not really involved in the Fellows Program. She therefore recommended that division heads be involved in the decisionmaking processes in the Fellows Program so that the program would benefit from their input and vision (Ley, 2002).

Students are also encouraged to make recommendations that fall outside the ideal type framework as well as to note probable sources of bias or error that should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

The practical ideal type is a microconceptual framework that addresses “what should” questions. When public managers ask questions about impacts or outcomes, the practical ideal type is inadequate. They must use the formal hypothesis as their micro-framework.

The Formal Hypothesis

Explanatory research and the formal hypothesis are the mainstay of social and policy science. The philosophies of science most often associated with empirical, explanatory research are logical positivism and logical empiricism, both of which use the hypothetico-deductive model. Explanatory research addresses the “why”
question. At its most basic, the formal hypothesis takes the form “if X then Y.”

Students are often confused about hypotheses, because their first academic experience with formal hypotheses was usually in a statistics class where the convoluted null hypothesis was stressed. As a result, the importance of the research hypothesis as a method of organizing inquiry was obscured.

The research hypothesis is the organizing engine that drives explanatory research. There are actually two formal hypotheses. One is associated with the abstract theory; this is the hypothesis found in the first conceptual framework table. The other is interpreted or operational; the operationalization table depicts the interpreted or operational hypothesis. Using more familiar language, the interpreted (or operational) hypothesis includes dependent and independent variables. Issues of sampling, probability, and generalizability arise naturally. Inferential statistics are the quantitative method most often used to test the hypothesis. The null hypothesis is connected to theory and is placed in proper perspective.

From a public affairs perspective, explanatory research is important, because all impact program evaluations use formal hypotheses. In its most general form, the underlying hypothesis for all outcome-oriented program evaluation is “if program X then outcome Y” or “program X causes outcome Y.” If this causal (or explanatory) link were not anticipated, then what is the justification for the program in the first place? Clearly, experimental and quasi-experimental designs are just different ways of testing the formal hypothesis: “if X then Y.” The context and availability of data dictate, for example, whether a “pre-test, post-test control group” or a “post-test only comparison group” design is used. The dependent variable is always an outcome measure. The threats to internal validity commonly associated with impact evaluation research are more easily understood when the underlying hypothesis is seen.

Examples of Formal Hypotheses

David Pearson was interested in the effect of hospital closings on rural economies. At the time, Pearson was working for a rural health agency. After reading the literature, he came up with the hypothesis in Table 8 (Pearson 2002, 42).

Although Pearson’s formal hypothesis dealt with the negative effect of hospital closures generally, his interpreted or operational hypothesis operationalized the notion of “local economy” as five dependent variables (labor force, unemployment rate, personal income, total earned income, and population). He also operational-
ized short term as one year and long term as 10 years. Table 9 shows how these variables were measured, the data source, and the direction of the hypothesis (Pearson 2002, 46).

Pearson’s methodology chapter also included information on the treatment and comparison group counties he used. Table 10 shows his results. The five measures of the local economy found in the operationalization table frame the results table (Pearson 2002, 57).

**Conclusion**

Students find the capstone process challenging and rewarding. Most find the first course (POSI 5335)—the course where they define the research purpose and develop the conceptual framework tables—the most difficult. The critical thinking involved in classifying, analyzing, hypothesizing, originating, designing, and creating these tables is often a new experience (Limbach and Waugh, 2005). Nevertheless, when a carefully constructed operationalization table is approved, the task of doing the empirical research in the second course (POSI 5397) is usually straightforward.

These tables are the missing link that tie together the research purpose, literature, theory, method, and results. The explicit microconceptual frameworks give rigor and coherence to the enterprise.

**Table 9. Operationalization of the Hypothesis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables (unit of measure)</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Year Later</td>
<td>10 Years Later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force (# employed)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (% unemployed)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total personal income ($ per county)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total earned income ($ per county)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (# residents)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital closure (0, 1 variable)</td>
<td>= hospital closure</td>
<td>0 = comparison</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As professors, we enjoy hearing students describe how the ARP process has changed them professionally. They see things differently and ask different questions during meetings. They use frameworks to organize presentations and communicate with subordinates. Their colleagues say, “You have changed.” The transformation of inquiry goes beyond the immediate task at hand and helps to create different, more capable professionals.

Table 10. David Pearson’s Independent t-test Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Short-term change ((t + 1) - (t - 1))</th>
<th>Long-term change ((t + 10) - (t - 1))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labor Force</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group Mean (N=24)</td>
<td>22.54</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Group Mean (N=24)</td>
<td>-46.63</td>
<td>1283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>-69.17</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(t) value</td>
<td>-.627</td>
<td>.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p) value</td>
<td>.534</td>
<td>.361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment Rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group (N=24)</td>
<td>-2.25</td>
<td>-2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Group (N=24)</td>
<td>-1.83</td>
<td>-2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(t) value</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>.332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p) value</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Personal Income</strong> (in thousands)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group (N=24)</td>
<td>16115</td>
<td>150316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Group (N=24)</td>
<td>19358</td>
<td>176962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>3243</td>
<td>26646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(t) value</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>.745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p) value</td>
<td>.582</td>
<td>.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Earned Income (in thousands)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group (N=24)</td>
<td>5949</td>
<td>54644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Group (N=24)</td>
<td>3914</td>
<td>57233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>-2035</td>
<td>2588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(t) value</td>
<td>-.794</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p) value</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Population is only measured reliably at the beginning of each decade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group (N=24)</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>3005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Group (N=24)</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>4462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>1456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(t) value</td>
<td>1.010</td>
<td>.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p) value</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>.459</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intermediate Theory: The Missing Link in Successful Student Scholarship

NOTES
1. The actual Capstone papers or Applied Research Projects run 50 to 100 pages. The Pi Alpha Alpha papers are shorter versions in keeping with the 20-page limit. Most Capstone papers written since 2001 are available at http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/. This Web site also includes a limited number of capstone papers since 1992. Texas State University's library has catalogued all ARPs dating back to the mid-1970s.
2. See http://uweb.txstate.edu/~ps07/sy35fa99.htm for the syllabus of POSI 5335 Problems in Research Methodology.
3. See http://uweb.txstate.edu/~ps07/prospectus1.htm for the prospectus requirements.
5. The information is always presented in table form somewhere in the ARP. Sometimes these tables are in chapters with different titles.
6. His Conduct of Inquiry is considered a classic in methodology and draws heavily from Dewey's (1938) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry. Kaplan also draws from William James and Charles Sanders Pierce.
7. See Dede (2004) for additional discussion of how MPA Programs use Dewey to bridge the theory/practice nexus.
8. The connection between Dewey, Kaplan and the philosophical underpinnings of these courses is more fully developed in Shields (1998) “Philosophy of Science” and Shields (2003) “Pragmatic Teaching Philosophy.”
10. This table appears in an earlier J-PAE article by Shields (2002).
11. Jeffers works for the Texas Municipal League. She interacts daily with Texas City Managers.
12. Unfortunately, the nature of an empirical capstone project limits the size and scope of the research questions that our students investigate. Many of the most interesting questions require time, skills, and effort well beyond the expectations of the class. We always keep in mind the goal of graduation and finding a manageable topic as the students focus on their research question/purpose.
15. Rebecca Anderson (2003) used content analysis to describe domestic partner benefits.
16. In their conclusion chapter, students often comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the framework. A new, more refined practical ideal type may emerge.
17. In Table 1, we identify five types of conceptual frameworks. We do not discuss the conceptual framework “models of operations research” because our students seldom use it.

REFERENCES
Intermediate Theory: The Missing Link in Successful Student Scholarship


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Hassan Tajalli is an associate professor of political science at Texas State University. He teaches methodology/statistics and courses in political science. He has published in journals such as The American Review of Public Administration, State and Local Government Review, and Policy Studies Journal. He is currently doing research on the educational opportunities of disadvantaged children in the United States.

334 Journal of Public Affairs Education
Leadership Theory and Practice in the MPA Curriculum: Reasons and Methods

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University of South Dakota

Abstract
As leadership evolves from a topic of management interest into its own unique topic of study and practice, it has a natural place in MPA curricula. Professionals with MPAs usually enter public service as technical experts, but are then often called upon to fill management—or “leadership”—vacancies in organizations. They are looked to as people who can get things done and serve the people inside and outside the organization. Technical experts are often called upon to be organizational generalists. Such a career path highlights the natural emergence in many MPA curricula to include explicitly some education about and training in leadership theory and practice. This article examines this natural trend generally and traces one program’s attempt to incorporate leadership into its curriculum specifically.

Management has been a consistent theme in public administration. It should be. Public administrators manage projects, they manage the efficiency of service delivery, they manage budgets and inventories and resources of all types. If we are to believe a growing literature and body of research on leadership theory and practice, we must believe that public administrators manage things, but they do not manage people: the cliché, of course, is that one manages things, but one leads people.

Though a cliché, it has become so because there is, as within all clichés, a kernel—if not more—of truth in the statement. That we should readily admit that public administrators, in the course of their work, will need to lead people should not worry the profession. It does not diminish the idea that public administrators are creatures of a progressive era that hoped for a more efficient, effective, neutral,
and scientific approach to running government. It rather enhances the idea that, as major players in the world of collective activity (in the nonprofit and government sectors, at least), public administrators have to combine those technical skills with the legitimate technologies of leadership.

In fact, doing leadership enhances the efficient and effective running of government, because it makes public organizations perform better. This leadership takes place on a grand scale as the work of leadership is understood in such broad strokes as service delivery, policy implementation, and the use or nonuse of discretion in their decision-making roles. This leadership also takes place for public administrators as they understand their work as interacting every day with public servants who themselves have values, commitments to the public sector, and ideas about implementation, service delivery, and what ought to be. Public administrators must have facility with the values-laden, relational demands of their everyday work in organizations filled with people, not just organizations filled with things.

Graduates of master of public administration programs, because of the nexus their profession represents between citizens, elected officials, and the mechanisms of government, are very well situated to engage in public leadership roles and, therefore, they should be prepared to do so. To fully prepare students and to assist mid-career professionals, public administration programs must include an explicit focus on leadership theory and practice. This paper explores how one MPA program is beginning to make changes to highlight leadership and generalists skills at least as much as it focuses on the technical skills that are traditionally and rightfully a part of the field.

Leadership Research in Public Administration

In the winter of 2002, a group of leadership researchers, having met at a conference at the Said Business School, Oxford University, sensed that leadership studies needed to come of age. A specific goal they had was to create a new international journal called Leadership to help disseminate leadership research. Generally, their mission was to bring some sense of commonality of purpose among leadership scholars, because

[...]leadership “research” has frequently been at best fragmented and at worst trivial, too often informed by the rather superficial ideas of management and academic consultants keen to peddle the latest, pre-packaged list of essential qualities deemed necessary for individual leaders and as the prescribed solution to all leadership dilemmas…. Consequently, the intellectual integrity of leadership as a legitimate and important field of study has remained open to question (Collinson and Grint, 2005, 5).
That intellectual question is alive and well in the academic world of public administration, and the desire for enhanced leadership practice and leadership “policies” in the public administration community is growing even more. The Symposium on Leadership Education in the July 2005 *Journal of Public Affairs Education* is evidence of this growing interest and need. Of course, leadership is not a new topic for the field. Follett (1918/1998), Barnard (1938), and Waldo (1980) discussed leadership issues in terms of values and relationships. Selznick (1983) and Denhardt (1981) wrote of leadership and the work of public administration in terms of infusing values into an organization and recognizing its central leadership role in society as a whole, thus requiring public administration to encompass far more than technical concerns. I have presented (1991) a focused discussion of values leadership in the work of public administration, presenting a model of leadership based on and consistent with fundamental Constitutional values. The reinvention movement highlighted the issue of leadership (see Ingram, Sanders, and Thompson, 1998). The demands of the 21st century underscore leadership in public organizations as well. Behn (1998) said aptly, “Leadership is not just a right of public managers. It is an obligation” (209). Terry (1995) advocates a model of leadership in public administration where the main approach of public managers is to preserve the institutional integrity of the agency within which they work. I have suggested (2004) that public managers perceive leadership differently, and that those perspectives make a difference in their work activities and their measures of leadership success. Van Wart’s (2005) work on leadership in public administration has further emphasized the topic.

As leadership studies becomes a more prominent field, a significant question about the practice of public administration is the unique context of public administrators. This has roots in the debates about whether leadership and management are the same or different organizational activities (see Kotter, 1990; Nirenberg, 1998; Baruch, 1998; Zaleznik, 1977). In the field of public administration, this question may be better understood by taking into account different views of the practice of public administration and what leadership might look like within those differing practice paradigms. For example, if a public administrator adheres to a public law/neutral implementer function of public administration (see Moe, 1997), leadership may look or feel much like neutral management competence. If, however, the equity elements of New Public Administration (see Marini, 1971; Frederickson, 1971/1992) are emphasized by a practitioner, public leadership may look and feel much more like engaging in small “p” politics in the development and implementation of community policies.

Of course, regardless of one’s approach to the field, MPAs will always be working in public organizations—organizations where people work for, with, and provide services to, other people. This point is key. Public administrators are organizational actors specifically as well as actors in communities, governments, and nonprofits generally. As mentioned in the introduction, such daily activity
within organizations, especially activity in management levels, requires an MPA to understand the nuances of management and leadership and be good at both.

Any way one looks at it, leadership studies is an essential element of comprehensively preparing MPAs to know how to run government and government organizations. Including leadership as a conscious part of an MPA curriculum can be done in many ways: reinforcing in core classes the notions that leading people, leading organizations, and leading policy implementation are essential elements of the work of public administration; promoting the idea of the MPA as a generalist in the world of specialists; and including a leadership course, or even a specialization track, in the curriculum.

However, graduate education in leadership is new enough that experimentation, creativity, and a bit of hard work may be required to have it make sense as a coherent part of an established curriculum. Help may be available in the many years of experience that military academies have in teaching and learning leadership and in the studies about the effectiveness of those efforts (see Clemente, 2000). Other studies of leadership education provide benchmarks in efforts to enhance the leadership focus in MPA curricula. Burbach, Matkin, and Fritz (2004) offer insight into the elements of leadership curricula, especially in their capacity to help students think critically about leadership in general and their subject matter in specific. Nevertheless, as there is much variety in the rigor of leadership literature, there is probably commensurate variety in the rigor of leadership courses within curricula. Sharing these experiments and experiences can be only helpful in creating a meaningful place for the study of leadership in the training of public administration professionals. One such effort is shared below.

**The Core Competency of Leadership in MPA Curriculum**

In the practice of public administration, people are often called upon to make the turn from technical expert to manager to leader in public organizations. Often they are required to make those transitions quickly and in times of uncertainty. A specialization in leadership serves to develop students who are generalists in a world in which specialists are often called upon, with perhaps some loss of effectiveness, to serve in leadership roles. Again, to fully prepare students and to assist mid-career professionals, public administration must include an explicit focus on leadership theory and practice.

As part of a continuous effort to improve both the delivery and content within the MPA curriculum, MPA faculty at the University of South Dakota refined their approach to teaching by outlining four competency areas: Management Competencies, Research and Technical Competencies, Professional Trends Competencies, and Leadership and Organizations Competencies. These competencies reflect general expertise areas that are necessary for success in public administration. Required courses in the curriculum are designed to meet the needs of these competencies, provide an orientation to the field, and provide a capstone
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experience to reflect on the practice of field. Students also choose an elective track beyond these core competency courses. The specialization is designed to enhance a knowledge and skill area that meets the student’s specific interests.

The curriculum is sequenced in a way that frontloads the first year with general knowledge of the field followed by a comprehensive exam. The second year involves internship experiences, professional trends, and specialization courses and culminates with a professional report that integrates general knowledge and some area of specific interest to the student. At the beginning of the second year of study, students begin to prepare a professional report that will be presented at the end of their course of study. Faculty guide the development of the report through formal coursework and independent study. The professional report is intended to deal with a general or current public problem that the student can research and “resolve.” The professional report is integrated fully as a component of the Professional Trends competency.

Of special note is the addition of the Leadership and Organization Competency and the resulting coursework flowing from it. To understand the origin and rationale of that competency, one must understand the W. O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership, which is housed in the political science department, as is the public administration program. The Farber Center and its Civic Leadership Model contributed to MPA curriculum refinement in two ways: 1) spillover of knowledge and research, because some MPA faculty members also hold joint appointments in the Farber Center; and 2) overlap in the purpose of MPA education and the commission of the Center to promote civic leadership.

University of South Dakota’s
W. O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership

In 1998, the W. O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership at the University of South Dakota was designated a Regental Center of Excellence. The main commission of the Center is to concentrate on education, research, and outreach efforts to advance the knowledge and practice of civic leadership. Civic leadership encompasses the ideas of public leadership broadly defined, with an emphasis on how government institutions, community organizations, nonprofit groups, and individual participation combine to improve the way collective action in society is encouraged and enhanced to promote sound governance. The Center’s research and educational efforts combine with advisory services to form a meaningful circle of gaining and disseminating knowledge and experience in the field of leadership.

A Conceptual Model of Civic Leadership informs the Center’s activities (see Fig. 1). The model suggests that three key components influence the look and feel of public leadership. The first is leadership enhancement, which focuses on the study and teaching of leadership principles and practices. The strategy is to help students recognize the importance of leadership in public organizations and to
develop leadership capacities that they can meaningfully implement to complement their work in public life and civic engagement. The second is management improvement, which concentrates on building and developing sound managerial practices to assist in collective action and organizational life. This element intends to help students, government-elected and appointed officials, and career civil servants manage the resources entrusted to them in an efficient and effective manner. The third is civic engagement and partnerships, which emphasizes the integral nature of community and individual involvement in the work of social governance. The hope here is to help citizens develop resources within the community to diagnose problems, identify solutions, and create opportunities.

Each of these three elements, including the idea of civic leadership itself, is a topic of educational activities, outreach services, and research. The relationship of these elements to each other in the work of public leadership is also itself a significant area of research and teaching. The methodology found most appropriate for research, education, and advisory services is that of action research, where theory and practice mutually inform each other through engagement with real-life experience and thought (see Small and Uttal, 2005; Denzin and Lincoln,
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2000). Action research, therefore, grounds the theoretical and practical aspects of the Center’s work, and applied research is consistently a focus of the faculty, especially through the Government Research Bureau, which is affiliated with the Center.

The overlap of the MPA program and the Civic Leadership Center becomes fairly obvious, and the curriculum benefits flow from it. The MPA program positioned itself as preparing students to engage in both public management and public leadership and pulled all three elements of the model into the curriculum: the MPA core competency of Leadership and Organizations links to the Leadership Enhancement element of Civic Leadership; the Management competency links to the management improvement element; the Professional Trends and Research competency links to the Civic Engagement and Partnerships element (though not as directly as the previous two); and the Professional Report requirement links nicely to the notion of Action Research, which grounds much of the Center’s research goals.

One direct result of the overlap was the creation of the leadership studies specialization within the MPA curriculum. The specialization in leadership studies is currently a nine-hour or three-course program of study and covers material from each of the three general areas of the Civic Leadership Model described above. Whether a student chooses the leadership track or not, the MPA curriculum is designed to have all students exposed to leadership ideas and skills as part of the general MPA education. A leadership course, distinct from those taken in the specialization, is a required core course in the MPA curriculum and is described later.

Linking Research, Theory, and Case Studies

The Civic Leadership Model is a natural catalyst for research and a meaningful educational tool itself; each element of the model is ripe for research leading to practical applications. Under the heading of Community Leadership Capacity Building, the Farber Center is using the Civic Leadership Model to guide its outreach programs. The Farber Center is working with local small communities to increase civic engagement and community collaboration to deal with current local challenges. Within the outreach service are numerous training sessions on leadership, management skills, and community involvement. These efforts offer students a chance to engage on the ground with some localities. This initiative is growing, as is the integration of student learning into that process.

One element of the Farber Center research effort is to gain a better understanding of what leadership actually is, especially as seen by practitioners in the field. Recent research revealed how different Midwest managers viewed their leadership activities (Fairholm and Murano, 2004). Coupled with previous research on leadership perspectives, such efforts form the basis of the content of the core course in leadership in the MPA program.
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The Core Leadership Course in the First Semester

One of the more unique elements of the curriculum is the course currently called Advanced Leadership Theory and Practice, which is a core required course in the first semester of the program. This course exists because of the consensus that leadership is a needed component of the practice of public administration; it is one course within the Leadership and Organization competency.

This course critically reviews and analyzes current strategic ideas about leadership from theoretical and operational perspectives. The intent of this course is to distinguish leadership from management (or other group activity) and to emphasize the leadership perspectives, values, skills, knowledge, and practices needed for success. One goal is to help students become or continue to be students of leadership as they engage in formal public, nonprofit, or private organizations as well as in social, civic, religious, or other group activities.

The course is designed to give students the opportunity to define for themselves the meaning and significance of leadership in organizations by exposing them to different frames or perspectives found in the literature. Another purpose of the course is to suggest that one’s perspective conditions what one thinks and will accept about leadership, even though that perspective may be limited in its reflection of what leadership may really be. Through individual and group projects and interactive class sessions, students have the chance to go beyond the outline of the course to enhance each other’s knowledge and practice of leadership. Ultimately, the vision of the course is to help prepare future leaders for success in their work of leadership and to encourage continuous study to prepare for this challenge. Three main components of the course, beyond the lectures, frame the delivery of the course: engagement with the literature; conceptualizing leadership and management; and recognizing and sharing leadership stories (case studies).

Engagement with the Literature

The literature on leadership is vast. Not all of it is about leadership. Not all of it is academic. Not all of it is practical. Wading through the volumes on leadership is an important part of developing maturity in leadership ideas and practices. A certain discernment is acquired the more one is exposed to the literature. This course requires students to read material that offers insight into a variety of leadership topics. Each article or chapter assigned is presented by one of the students. Thus, students practice not only communication and synthesis skills, but also have a chance to say out loud what they have thought about leadership. The question-and-answer session following each presentation gives the students a chance to engage with each other on a variety of leadership topics.

As further engagement in the literature, students either pick a leadership book on their own to review or develop an annotated bibliography of references that reinforce their leadership study. The books students pick range from fiction to biography to academic research. Some quality control must be maintained,
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but the student is generally free to choose. The benefit to the student comes in sifting through the many leadership books to find one that interests them, and then reviewing the ideas in the book using the topics and discussion from class to inform that review. The benefit to the entire class is that all students are required to prepare a one-page executive summary of their book review, which is then compiled into a booklet that each student receives. This booklet gives them something to study for the comprehensive exam, but it also gives them a feel for the variety of books extant and the different perspectives of the reviewers themselves. The annotated bibliography is designed to incorporate contemporary literature (no more than five years old) in leadership. The annotated bibliography leans much more toward journal articles and research reports than books. It, too, however, is distributed to all the students so that the entire class can benefit from each other’s research.

Leadership and Management Debate

A significant area of disagreement, research, and thought surrounds the question of leadership and management as distinct, the same, or intertwined. To help students grapple with that question and its implications, they are assigned to read a book that serves as a catalyst for thought and then, drawing upon the ideas in that book, other assigned readings in class, and their personal points of view, they are asked to prepare a paper to answer the question, “Are leadership and management the same?” This assignment helps them unpack different points of view and then synthesize their own point of view on leadership and management.

Leadership Stories and Case Studies

One of the challenges of a class on leadership is to make it practical—to have students do leadership in the course of the class. In the leadership specialization, a service learning course requirement allows students to choose and fulfill some project of civic engagement and to reflect on the leadership involved. This service learning course has had students develop their own nonprofit organizations, plan and implement leadership training experiences, make historic surveys of cities and engage in historic preservation activities, and a variety of other activities. However, the core class in leadership does not have such a component. As a surrogate for real time, intentional leadership experiences, the course relies upon case studies of two kinds.

The first kind of case study is traditional in nature. A case study is a story that is based on actual events and circumstances and that rewards careful study and analysis. It illustrates a particular point or has a definite teaching purpose in mind (see Lynn, 1999). Either in written form or via videos, students are exposed to organizations and situations where leadership (in a variety of forms and definitions) are presented. Typical case study teaching methods are then employed. One part of the class is devoted to underscoring research into different perspec-
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tives of leadership. An effective tool in this section is to show video case studies culled from many sources, including popular movies, to illustrate the particular leadership perspective discussed. Students respond to the scenario and make vital connections to the theory as they work through what they saw in the case study. Some movies used in class include *The Sound of Music, Cool Hand Luke, Executive Suite, Gandhi, Henry V, Apollo 13,* and *Renaissance Man.* Innumerable others could be used as well.

The second kind of case study used in class is a personal one—a case study that the students write about themselves. The assignment is to reflect on the student's own experiences and write a meaningful case study illustrating particular leadership perspectives discussed throughout the course. Typically, these case studies include these general parts: Introduction and Background (presenting the actors, the problems/issues, defining characteristics, etc.); the Leadership Scenario (describing key events, what stands out as indicative of the phenomenon/problem/issue being addressed or described, and any options or implications of the events); the Leadership Relationship (explaining how the relationship worked, what power and influence was at play, and what approach to followers were taken); the Leadership Lessons (highlighting the moment of decision, the consequences, and key lessons learned); the Leadership Perspective (reflecting upon the leadership perspective(s) that this case study illustrates.).

This case study allows students to integrate all of the previous material as they reflect upon a moment in their lives when leadership was at play. The process of choosing the story makes the student “converse” with the leadership ideas to make sure it really illustrates leadership. The process of writing the case study makes the student integrate many components of the course. The activity of identifying different leadership perspectives makes the student clarify his or her understanding of various ways of seeing leadership in action. One additional requirement is to present the case study to the rest of the class. This is one more chance for students to practice presenting ideas (often complex and abstract ideas) in public, but it also requires a confidence in the material. After a case study presentation, the class asks questions and talks about the implications of the case study and helps the student refine the case study. After the student incorporates the comments and ideas generated by the presentation, the case study is turned in.

Conclusion

Public administration requires the ability to manage organizations and to lead people. Public administrators find themselves not only doing the technical work of an expert governmental actor, but also find themselves interacting with citizens and fellow public employees. More often than not, those who hold MPAs are eventually called upon to be the person of authority within a branch or division of some government or nonprofit agency. This places them in a difficult position of transitioning from a technical expert to someone who needs to be an expert in
the art and science of leading people and managing resources. Often MPA curricula focus on developing experts, thinking that the people stuff just comes with time (or does not, which is okay too). This is an unfortunate state of affairs—one that, as studies into leadership theory and practice indicate, ought not to continue. The people stuff plays a major role in successful organizational outcomes. Public administrators need to know that body of knowledge—leadership—as much as budgeting, public finance, administrative law, or public personnel.

The core MPA course in leadership described above grounds MPA students in the theories of leadership and encourages them to develop their own theory of leadership as they compare different ideas, assess multiple case studies, and prepare their own personal case study of leadership. But ultimately the course highlights for the MPA student that leadership is important; that is it a part of the work they will do; and that is it essential to think about their leadership as they engage with political appointees, public employees, and citizens throughout their careers. Focusing only on traditional management skills does a disservice to the MPA student. Emphasizing leadership, even if for only one class, complements their professional training for managing today’s governments and nonprofits.

Many MPA curricula are trending that way, and much attention is recently being brought to bear on the subject. By integrating leadership as a core component of the curriculum and requiring students to grapple with the ideas and practice of leadership, we serve our profession well. Creating familiarity with the leadership literature, distinguishing between leadership and management, and illustrating leadership through case studies and personal stories are powerful ways to incorporate leadership teaching into the MPA curriculum and to graduate MPAs who are better equipped to be technical experts, who know how to transition into being generalists who know how to get things done and change people’s lives for the better.

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Value Frameworks in the Policy Analysis Course: An Application Exercise

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Abstract
Professors of graduate-level policy analysis courses are challenged with the task of incorporating a broader or more normatively comprehensive analytical perspective into their teaching. This article describes and discusses a writing assignment that guides students toward a working knowledge of traditional and alternative approaches to the normative dimensions of policy analysis. In the course of conducting policy analysis, students study a number of value frameworks. At the same time, they discover the necessity, and complexity, of transforming these abstract perspectives into reasonably objective and testable criteria. Finally, in the process of making recommendations, they are asked to juxtapose the demands of these evaluative frameworks with the realities of political and fiscal feasibility. This assignment, rooted in but also distinguished from modern analysis scholarship, is designed to build the crucial skills that contemporary analysts must have in today’s intricate professional setting.

In 2001, I outlined an approach to teaching graduate-level policy analysis that advocated expanding the conventional curriculum to incorporate nontraditional value frameworks (Romero, 2001). My premises were that policy decisions are driven by the value paradigm that guides analysis and that a number of paradigms vie for this authority. This simply extended into the classroom the now familiar concept that, while an efficiency-based doctrine prevails, rival, or at least divergent, perspectives have gained both professional authenticity and public support. While this approach undoubtedly enters contentious ground, challenging students with an assemblage of value-laden, often antithetical, orientations,
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it does not contend their equivalency on any level other than their emergence, through the political process, as frameworks of recognized worth to some sector of society. It recognizes that professionals trained only in the tools and concepts of a narrowly drawn form of analysis may find themselves poorly equipped to fulfill the expectations of their employers, clients, and the general public, all increasingly likely to demand familiarity with alternate approaches.

Yet, as Vining and Weimer (2002) argue, a teaching strategy that imparts the concepts of analysis through lecture and readings alone falls short, an observation that seems particularly pertinent here. Alternative perspectives of analysis tend to be complex, and even traditional methods are likely to prove trickier on the job than described in books, necessitating that nascent analysts work through these ideas in relevant applications. What I therefore offer here is description and discussion of an assignment designed to generate master’s (of public administration, policy analysis, public affairs, and other related degrees) graduates able to negotiate the increasingly complicated policy realm and cognizant of the process by which paradigms shape policy choice. The exercise incorporates two rightfully entwined yet frequently alienated components of analysis—the abstract frameworks of appropriate public decision making, and the objective criteria from which alternatives may in turn be assessed. To be sure, the assignment is not without its flaws and frustrations, and readers may harbor reservations, particularly about the introduction of philosophical context. I intend to make the case in this essay, however, that the project functions as a realistic reflection of the realities of policy analysis, preparing students to confront public and client demands as well as the sometimes unexpected and counterintuitive challenges of the profession.

Rules of the Game—Assignment Guidelines

Students are first instructed to choose a public problem, either an issue that has already been targeted by a policy or one that is emerging and has not yet triggered a governmental response. Recent topics have included national concerns, such as the impact of elderly drivers or the illegal downloading of music from the Internet, or more locally relevant controversies, such as how to address budget shortfalls in a city’s metropolitan bus service or where to construct a potentially unpopular coal-burning power plant. The students then identify three or four possible policy alternatives, including the status quo. They may refer to already proposed alternatives or define novel options, especially by applying generic policy types such as regulation, deregulation, or market-based incentives. Table 1 illustrates a sample outline of this first step, addressing the problem of a shortage of urban parkland.

The next step is to identify several paradigms from which to assess each policy alternative. I require at least one efficiency-based framework, utilitarian or individually focused, in recognition of the common authority of these warrants in the
contemporary American public sphere. Students then choose among a number of alternative approaches introduced in class. Although this varies by semester, a typical mix might include libertarian, public choice, communitarian, environmentalist, and/or Rawlsian frameworks. Certainly, some scholars and practitioners might now begin to question my approach, wondering why a broad philosophical spectrum is even introduced or, more narrowly, whether the use of the more arcane and rigid labels is really necessary to impart the point that analysis anticipates and satisfies a range of principles and ideals. My justification for this will be presented in the following section.

Each framework is complemented through the definition of practical assessment criteria, tailored to the particular policy issue under investigation. Table 2 provides a sample of selected frameworks/criteria for the parkland policy case. This prompts a progression from the basic understanding of foundational

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<th>Framework</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individually based efficiency/Pareto optimality</td>
<td>Increase home buyers’ overall utility (access to nearby parks provides a benefit not outweighed by increased home price) without depressing private sector profits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarianism</td>
<td>Maximize overall public benefit (average increase, monetized through contingent valuation, accruing to homes in walking distance of park) in relation to costs (average increase in housing prices)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawlsian</td>
<td>Increase overall park acreage, with inequalities in accessibility accruing to benefit of lowest income neighborhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertarian</td>
<td>Least regulatory impact on home prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>Affordability within current city budget</td>
</tr>
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Table 2. Framework Associated Criteria to Apply to Assessment of Parkland Policy Alternatives
precepts to the definition of an objective and observable measure by which to compare and judge alternatives. Naturally, there is no single, proper criterion to attach to any given framework, and the implication of the choice made is one of the crucial lessons of this paper, also discussed further below. The final task is to loosely “score” (e.g., low/medium/high; 1-10) the alternatives from the perspective of each framework/criterion, alone and in combination with a feasibility consideration. A matrix summarizing this assessment must be provided, and each student presents his or her overall analysis, as summarized by this matrix, to the class. Table 3 provides a sample of this matrix applied to the parkland case.

Below, I more fully explore each phase of this assignment: the consideration of value frameworks; articulation of their associated evaluation criteria; and tradeoffs and choices made in the process of merging frameworks with feasibility. This will more finely emphasize the assignment’s value, highlighting its roots in classic and modern scholarship of analysis and illustrating how I have designed it to maximize students’ grasp of the complexities of the art and craft of policy assessment.

**Defining and Defending Value Frameworks**

A critical purpose of this exercise is to present a variety of available perspectives for analysis, of which the classic, cost-benefit/efficiency orientation is only one. The idea is potentially controversial, because it can require accommodation, or at least recognition, of disagreements on not just prosaic matters of policy design but moral beliefs. Yet, while somewhat unconventional, the assignment is rooted in fairly mainstream, contemporary outlooks on policy choice.

**A Justification in the Abstract.** The suggestion to introduce nonefficiency-based concepts into the teaching and practice of analysis is far from novel. Numerous authors advocate this more expansive approach, which generally stops well short of either advocating a particular value framework or claiming that all should be treated as of comparable moral equivalence to all parties in every policy setting. It simply recognizes that analysts should be grounded in the precepts of the various frames of reference that might legitimately compete as bases of policy decisionmaking, depending on the setting and the client (e.g., Anderson, 1993; Table 3. Assessment Matrix of Parkland Policy Alternatives by Value Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alternative 1</th>
<th>Alternative 2</th>
<th>Alternative 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pareto optimality</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarianism</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rawlsian</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertarian</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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</tbody>
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Bobrow and Dryzek, 1987; Fischer, 2003; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Majone, 1989; Stone, 2002).

Although it might alternately be argued that value struggles are properly waged through the democratic process, well in advance of the point where analysts do, or should, enter the stage, the literature identifies a multitude of occasions when their appreciation of a variety of frameworks is crucial. Analysts are deeply involved in policy design, whether at the formulation or implementation stage, and we are long past the point where their advice is routinely accepted as neutral, objective, and fully independent of underlying value choices. Wildavsky observes, “[N]o one can do analysis without becoming aware that moral considerations are integral to the enterprise” (1987, 12), while Radin points to the pervasive concern among some scholars “that the analyst’s search for rationality is a way to avoid the demands of democracy” (2000, 104). Failure at least to acknowledge a range of potential warrants for decision-making may well trivialize the profession’s contribution. Furthermore, modern analysts may be called upon to facilitate the process through which groups and individuals hash out values-and morals-based differences. This role is likely compromised in the absence of this common grounding, an undesirable effect if, as Gutmann and Thompson believe, “the moral authority of collective judgments about policy depends in part on the moral quality of the process by which citizens collectively reach those judgments” (1996, 4).

This said, however, while this strengthening scholarly and professional consensus may justify the introduction of alternatives to efficiency, it does not by and large employ philosophical disciplines as organizing labels for these alternatives. For example, in step 4 of his Eightfold Path to analysis, Bardach (2005) introduces a variety of criteria, many of which are premised on notions other than efficiency, such as freedom and community. However, these are not developed beyond an objectified, standardized level—that is, the theoretical frameworks that inform the criteria are not explored. And, in his illustration of an analysis of education alternatives, Dror (1971, 248) states in regard to clarification of aims, “[W]hat I have in mind is not ultimate values on the level of philosophy of education, but more concrete aims on a more operational level.”

The exercise I outline here is therefore unusual in this respect. I contend, though, that there is no good reason not to (and many reasons why we should) expose students to the substantive, structural arguments that underlie what are—when taken out of context—fairly insubstantial objective criteria such as Dror’s (1971, 248) “increased output in terms of knowledge” or Bardach’s (2005, 29) “neighborliness.” After all, most policy analysis texts devote a great deal of space to the essential tenets of welfare economics and their core validation of objective criteria such as maximization of individual choice. In their widely used text, Weimer and Vining (1999, 41) refer to this as a requisite “perspective for putting perceived social problems in context.”
Yet, this substantiation protocol generally is not extended to nonefficiency frameworks. Consider the fairly common criteria for assessing a policy's impact on the poorest citizens. That standard may be rendered more defensible and appropriate when utilized by an analyst familiar with Rawls’ warrant for its value to society. Similarly, the objective of choosing a policy option that enhances neighborhood capacity may be more effective in the hands of an analyst with an understanding of the literature of the communitarian movement. Otherwise, criteria may merely be empty shells, platitudes that analysts are expected to consider but that exist in an authoritative vacuum and exert little moral or ethical weight.

On the other hand, analysts trained to respect broad philosophical orientations will, as stipulated by the public or other clients, test policy alternatives against canons that contemplate the most enduring conceptual civic debates: the primacy of the individual versus society or the natural world; what constitutes “just” distributions; the process by which decisions should be reached, and so on.

Clearly, no course or even an entire degree program can introduce all of the philosophies or value frameworks of potential relevance nor render students experts in any one. And some professors may remain uncomfortable with the use of labels at all, preferring, for example, to assign a range of readings on the significance of societal ties rather than focusing more narrowly on the communitarian literature. Yet, the basic exercise accommodates this inherent limitation and flexibility, because its purpose is simply to build awareness of the existence of alternative options and to encourage practice in linking frameworks to criteria. Even if the labels are discarded, students gain the insight that alternative approaches exist and that producers and consumers of policy accredit them to some degree. I believe this to be of substantial worth, even to those who ultimately find positions where they are expected to confine their assessments to traditional perspectives.

**Making this Work in the Classroom**

Naturally, course material must prepare students to undertake the assignment, and so the foundation of the class involves instruction and readings that present the precepts, as well as the inherent obscurities and criticisms, of a variety of value frameworks. Although this may again raise the question of why we should bother to trudge through what may be viewed as philosophical bogs, future analysts should appreciate that the warrants that (explicitly or implicitly) underlie commonly used criteria of analysis may be complex or even equivocal. Learning to recognize and work with this reality is crucial.

In the section on communitarianism, for instance, students were assigned some of the classic works (e.g., selections from MacIntyre, 1981; Sandel, 1982) and were asked to peruse the Communitarian Network Web site, all of which introduce the core premises and prescriptions. But they were also pointed to criticisms of the approach, such as Little’s (2002) brief but useful perspective. Correspondingly, I assign selections from Rawls (1971), as well as Nozick’s (1974) pointed
refutations of Rawls’ ideas. Standard texts on the primacy of the welfare economics paradigm are complemented by commentary on the attendant, but not always recognized, value bias of that perspective (e.g., Radin, 2000).

At the same time, all of this background needs to be combined with a teaching strategy that promotes evidence of the authority and currency of alternative views. In a recent semester, what really made the case for communitarianism as a credible foundation of contemporary decision-making was Governor Howard Dean’s speech announcing his presidential candidacy (Dean, 2003). Declarations in that speech such as “we are stronger when we are beholden to each other as a national community” confirmed for students the force of the ideas they had read about as abstract philosophies. Overall, contemporaneous or classic political speeches, editorials, and the like are an effective means of illustrating the influential status of a variety of traditional and alternative value frameworks. Their incorporation also allows the class a release from rigid labels and terminologies of philosophical orthodoxies, because only the broad concepts tend to survive the transition to these sorts of applications.

Pursuing this strategy, I have turned to documents of the American founding era to highlight the historical pedigree of libertarian principles in our nation. For example, Federalist Papers 10 and 47-51 support an “essential precaution in favor of liberty” (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, 1961, 336), emphasizing the roots of modern advocacy of the protection of individual freedoms from government regulation. Likewise, as Daniels (1985) suggests, arguments in favor of health care safety nets (found, for instance, in editorials proposing government health insurance initiatives) are a useful demonstration of the power of the Rawlsian “justice as fairness” concept, for they often reference (although not in Rawls’ terms) a tacitly recognized veil of ignorance that limits everyone’s knowledge of their own future health care needs. Finally, it is of course easy to find a multitude of common references to assign as indicants of the general acknowledgment of the utility of cost/benefit, efficiency-based analysis.

Materials that accentuate the legitimacy of less traditional approaches also highlight the likelihood that analysts may work for a client—perhaps an elected official, public agency, or interest group—oriented in one of these directions. For example, an analyst employed by a conservation advocacy organization would certainly be expected to understand the precepts of the environmentalist philosophy. A position with a very conservative member of the U.S. Congress would require a working familiarity with public choice and/or libertarian precepts. Again, although the labels may not be commonly used in these settings, the ideas behind them will be regularly referenced.

In short, the first stage of the assignment reflects a course emphasis on three basic facets of a variety of value frameworks: core precepts, weaknesses and internal tensions, and basis/evidence of contemporary legitimacy. By literally putting into practice the scholarship acknowledging and championing the role of both
traditional and alternate frameworks, it grants future analysts the sophistication to work with the often deceptively complex perspectives that the public and other clients may increasingly demand. In terms of the assignment, this prepares students well for the next step—tackling the definition of criteria by which these orientations are transformed into tools of policy assessment.

**Establishing Criteria for Assessment**

The second stage advances the theme of fully elaborated value frameworks as the appropriate basis for effective analysis only when accompanied by objective and observable criteria of assessment. It therefore stresses the difference between merely declaring an alternative the “winner” from a loosely defined, contextual orientation (e.g., “this regulatory policy is recommended from a utilitarian perspective because it has the best cost/benefit ratio”) and establishing a clarified, tangible measure (e.g., “this regulatory policy is recommended from a utilitarian perspective because it will save citizens X tax dollars while costing affected businesses less than X dollars”). Bardach (2005, 26) highlights the pivotal role of this task, noting that selecting criteria “is the most important step for introducing values and philosophy into the policy analysis.” Thus, following the presentation and justification of frameworks, students engage in the crucial complementary step of articulating criteria by which to assess their policy alternatives through these lenses. The challenge this represents is intriguing, undermining any assumptions that analysts can, without any classroom practice or training, make an on-the-job leap from a grasp of underlying frameworks to a workable standard for analysis.

Certainly, some frameworks are easier to transform into appropriate criteria than others. Most students, for instance, are able to progress from a basic grasp of utilitarianism to a method for evaluating policy alternatives from that perspective—weighing overall benefits against costs—fairly easily. Even so, they may find it difficult to articulate which costs and benefits to measure. A student working with a utilitarian assessment of the proposal to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge grappled with whether—and how—to include subjective, nonmonetized quality of life costs (e.g., threats to traditional native lifestyles), the difficulty of assessing objective but uncertain benefits (e.g., jobs created), and the complication of evaluating these incommensurables in a cost/benefit equation. While the matter of gauging the inherent and comparative value of intangibles may have already been introduced to students in another course, this exercise challenges students to wrestle with exactly the same sorts of questions as practiced analysts. My point is to illustrate, even in the case of the most common frameworks of analysis, the centrality of the link between the conceptual foundation and objective measures of assessment.

The adaptation of less common frameworks into observable criteria is of course more challenging. Consider, for example, one of the sticking points of judging
alternatives from a communitarian perspective: the matter of which community forms the foundation of analysis. This particular difficulty manifested itself in a paper addressing the U.S. Visa policy and other options for handling the entry of foreigners into the United States post-September 11, particularly in regard to our southern border. The criterion involved an assessment of the extent to which alternatives reflected a reasoned community consensus. But its application required the acknowledgement of at least two distinct communities: a fluid, trans-border Latino society that opposed severe immigration controls, and a national community concerned with external threats and supportive of greater restrictions. While the student could not, of course, resolve this intrinsic conundrum of the philosophy, the application prepared her to anticipate and acknowledge its impact.

Libertarianism, or whatever label we might choose to put on the notion of primacy of individual freedom, presents its own set of complications. One central learning experience is working through the seemingly straightforward reliance on a criterion of maintaining present distributions and ownership rights. The tricky question for a student considering various Social Security fixes from a libertarian framework was how this standard would assess adjustments to distributions that are now the status quo but were initially imposed by government. Another illustrative challenge arose in a student's analysis of policies designed to address illegal music downloading from the Internet. She discovered that the seemingly unambiguous, libertarian-based criterion that rightful owners be compensated for property losses could not settle the question of which policy alternative was preferable. In this issue area, the dispute largely centers on the questions of who possesses property rights—musicians, or the companies that pay them for their work.

As these examples indicate, a key lesson of this step involves the necessary tradeoffs and choices inherent even to apparently clear-cut frameworks. This notion was, of course, introduced more abstractly in the first stage, when students first gained and demonstrated familiarity with the precepts and tensions of the value paradigms, but it is reinforced in the act of figuring out how to measure alternatives against those precepts. On the other hand, another critical function is the revelation that the objectives associated with value frameworks sometimes may be not too hard to articulate but too easy.

For instance, a student focusing on communitarianism initially decided that one readily observed and seemingly reasonable criterion by which to assess policy alternatives from this perspective was simply whether—or the extent to which—public input had been facilitated. But, after reading more of the underlying literature, and its focus on discussions that actually build community standards (Fowler, 1991), the student recognized that process alone would not be an adequate surrogate for the principles championed by the movement. Likewise, a student utilizing an environmental protection paradigm to assess alternatives for protecting a city's trees had trouble defining an appropriately robust criterion, one that would not accredit largely cosmetic policies. A simple criterion of maxi-
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mization of number of trees preserved in the development process would highly rate a policy that allowed clear-cutting followed by replanting. But while the number of post-development trees would be high, the broader ecosystem would be disrupted, and thus the value framework would be violated.

Grappling with these objective measures provides practical insight into a potential snag in the policy assessment process—relying on superficial and ungrounded standards as assessment measures for rich and complex value orientations. In sum, the lesson of the “too easy” criterion highlights a trap that the ethical analyst needs to avoid—overly simple “tests” that may too readily anoint a policy alternative from the perspective of a given framework. Again, though, it is only against the backdrop of the frameworks themselves that students are able to recognize criteria flawed in this manner.

A final point to mention here is that I ascribe to Bardach’s (2005) view that criteria are used to judge projected outcomes as opposed to just the abstract idea of the alternatives. However, this sort of assessment can take a great deal of time. Therefore, I allow students to simply conclude that more information is required (and indicate where that information might be found) before a final assessment of a policy alternative under a given framework can be made. This is a minor matter to me, since the point of the paper is more to gain familiarity with the mechanics of analysis than to provide conclusive answers. However, many students subsequently develop this initial effort into their master’s thesis, in which they gather the additional information.

FEASIBILITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, the assignment emphasizes one last complexity of analysis by mandating the consideration of feasibility in the process of making recommendations. To review, at this stage students are asked to conclude by rating or ranking the alternatives from the perspective of each value framework, as defined by their criteria. They may state, for example, that when the preferred orientation is utilitarianism, their criterion suggests that policy alternative A is best, C is worst, and so on. This is as far as the analysis is required to go. Some students proceed to attempt some sort of negotiation among the frameworks, perhaps by favoring a single alternative that scores highest on the most criteria, and they are free to do so. Overall, I simply try to prepare the class for a position in which they will likely answer to a client of some sort who may articulate a very clear framework of analysis or who may depend on the analyst to choose an option that best satisfies a variety of publicly legitimate approaches. Their strategy in making final recommendations will at that time have to be adjusted accordingly. Thus, the project is designed to equip them to determine the best course of action from an ascribed framework, not to determine which framework that should be. For, as Munger (2000, 12) explains this most delicate facet of analysis, the matter of the final choice, “this is not a technical question, but an ethical one.”
I do, however, require that recommendations be tempered with assessments of which alternatives are realistic. Clearly, analysis driven solely by feasibility would be of little inherent value while, at the same time, analysts cannot be in the business of recommending policy actions that, while valid, are simply unworkable. This final step is a useful exercise in this balancing act.

In a way, feasibility can be considered a value framework in itself. As Meltsner (1971) explains, the very worth of the endeavor of analysis depends on the ability to actually implement professional recommendations. I present it in class, however, more in terms of a set of criteria over and above those already defined for each value framework. Let me also emphasize here, as I do in the course, that the project’s overall focus on the careful weaving together of value frameworks and their appropriate, attendant criteria is in itself a useful lesson in feasibility. Only those alternatives that are appropriately chosen through an informed understanding of underlying values will satisfy the expectations of the general public or a particular client.

Although a number of potentially relevant standards may be utilized, I tend to emphasize feasibility in terms of what is politically realistic (as outlined, for example, by Meltsner, 1971) and/or affordable. Thus, several students have reasoned that when citizens are riled and demand immediate action, it is unfeasible for officials to champion the status quo or to offer only an incremental change, even if a nonincremental strategy is of questionable value. This came up in a paper assessing possible responses to the matter of unwanted telemarketing calls. Suggested policy alternatives were all problematic from the perspective of one or more frameworks. Whether considered from a utilitarian, Rawlsian, or communitarian point of view, any policy representing a significant change from the status quo of no regulation was undesirable, as the alternatives were all more costly (in the respective terms of each approach) than the problem itself. Yet, the feasibility framework counseled that one of these alternatives had to be chosen—doing nothing was too great a political liability.

On the other hand, sometimes any policy response, no matter how well justified from a number of value frameworks, may be untenable. This was the conclusion of a student studying a local controversy over where to site a high-voltage power line; all proposed routes faced an organized and angry group of citizen opponents. Depending on which substantive value-framework was utilized, each proposed route was fatally flawed in the eyes of one of these powerful groups. For example, the best value in terms of costs of construction versus benefits of use was the most harmful from the environmentalists’ perspective, while the least environmentally harmful route infringed the most on the property values of wealthy landowners. A primary lesson to emerge from this paper was that, from a feasibility standpoint, no site could be chosen, because of the estimable political cost of any decision.
Perhaps the most useful demonstration of this mixture of feasibility and value frameworks is the juxtaposition of cost benefit analysis and affordability. The reality that the most fiscally efficient option is still out of reach for a government with limited financial resources is a seemingly straightforward concept that students may not easily grasp, and the application exercise helps to illustrate the tension. In this regard, students are particularly encouraged to consider the administrative costs of various alternatives. For example, in my sample analysis of alternatives to rectify the low acreage of public parkland, the option of requiring developers to provide parks seemed like a very inexpensive—and utilitarian—way to achieve the goal, but only until students included the costs of monitoring compliance. Overall, then, I construct this stage to emphasize feasibility as strongly as possible, with truly unfeasible alternatives facing rejection regardless of how well they satisfy other criteria. This prepares students to avoid the trap that Majone (1989, 70) identifies, one in which analysts “tend to treat political and institutional constraints, if at all, as second thoughts or last-minute caveats appended to an already hardened analytic structure.”

Conclusions
My aspirations for this assignment are grounded in an orientation to the field that favors instructor and practitioner fluency in both traditional and alternative orientations. Thus, I have constructed a project that aims to prepare analysts for the field’s inherent tensions by highlighting the value paradigms through which objective information must be processed. The argument could fairly be made that this is an exercise in frustration, for at many times it is. But, graduate training that portrays an unrealistic, overly simple perspective on analysis is of little benefit. Assigned applications should be just as messy as the professional practice will prove to be. Furthermore, the assignment provides much more than an immersion in the attendant aggravations of analysis, by offering positive and substantive lessons. It inculcates recognition and respect for traditional and alternative viewpoints, crucially combined with informed practice in defining appropriate associated criteria for any abstract value base.

Finally, let me emphasize that this outline is meant to function as a conceptual framework and not as a lesson plan. Clearly, there is a great deal of disparity among the graduate programs in which this project might be relevant, and these variations must be accommodated. Some professors might have the luxury (although we might not all see it as such) of devoting an entire course to the precepts of nontraditional value frameworks. Others might have to combine all of the policy analysis material, fundamental tools as well as theories, into a single course. More substantively, some may choose to revise the assignment in keeping with Majone’s (1989) argument that value frameworks and attendant norms are more relevant to the initial identification of problems than to the selection of policies. It would not be difficult to adapt this assignment to that perspective.
Students would outline a set of conditions and then, still using paradigms and criteria, assess whether various orientations would define them as problematic. In short, colleagues who agree with my general methods will want to adjust this sketch to their own inclinations and programs. I anticipate as well that those who differ or disagree will join in a dialogue of how best to prepare students of analysis for a rapidly changing and evolving field. Overall, my purpose has been to contribute an assignment that challenges both students and their professors to attend to the appropriate discernment and application of the variety of values that inform analysis.

Notes
1. I acknowledge my debt to the analysis example provided in the first chapter of Weimer and Vining (1999). Although the substance of my assignment is different, I was motivated by their matrix approach.
2. A similar, but less problematic, quandary may arise, as Arthur and Shaw (1991) note, when a given criterion is sanctioned by two or more quite different theoretical approaches.
3. For more on this basic concept in regard to ethical evaluations, see Szostak (2005).
4. Interestingly, this was precisely the outcome of the actual dispute in our city. After facing outcries against every proposed route, the utility company deferred any decision.

References
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Teaching Courses on Managing Diversity: Using Learning Contracts to Address Challenges and Model Behavior

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Abstract
Managing for diversity is widely recognized as an increasingly important component of public administration curricula. Students must be prepared to function effectively in a workplace characterized by greater diversity among coworkers and the publics served. Despite the recognized need for courses on managing diversity, many faculty feel ill-prepared to determine course content and teach such courses. This article provides practical and normative justifications for the use of learning contracts in diversity courses. From a practical standpoint, learning contracts are an effective means of meeting the needs of diverse students and increasing course relevance while reducing the burden on the instructor to completely retool and develop a new area of expertise. The author asserts that learning contracts should be used because they are an appropriate instructional strategy for the adult learners who comprise public affairs programs and they provide a means for the instructor to model a behavior that demonstrates valuing diversity as an asset. The author presents a step-by-step guide to learning contracts tailored for use in diversity courses, provides examples of learning contract provisions developed by students in courses on managing diversity, and shares feedback received from students about the process.

If public affairs programs are to meet their charge of preparing students for professional leadership in public service, they must take steps to ensure that students are able to work effectively in and utilize the strengths associated
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with an environment of increasing diversity. To do so will require that program administrators and faculty move beyond mere acknowledgement of the need for diversity in the curriculum and the offering of a list of explanations for why it is not done. We must develop and apply strategies that address the obstacles and facilitate more diversity-related course offerings. In this article, I briefly reiterate the rationale for teaching diversity in public affairs programs and review the obstacles that faculty have identified. I then make the case that learning contracts can be an effective instructional strategy for responding to these challenges. I present both practical and normative justifications for the use of learning contracts in courses on diversity. For those who are motivated to use this instructional approach, I provide guidelines for the use of learning contracts and, in tables throughout the article, I share samples of learning contract provisions that students have developed in my courses on managing diversity.

THE CASE FOR TEACHING DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

The population of the United States is becoming increasingly diverse. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the total population exceeds 281 million, among whom more than 12 percent (35.3 million) are Hispanic, almost 13 percent (36.4 million) are black or African American, and four percent (11.9 million) are Asian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). By the year 2050, these groups are projected to comprise 24.4, 14.6, and 8 percent of the U.S. population, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Similar patterns of diversification have been experienced and are expected to continue in both higher education (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995) and in the workplace (U.S. Department of Labor, 2003). It is widely acknowledged that organizational effectiveness in the future will likely be in large part a function of the ability to make a sincere effort to recognize diversity as a strength rather than a liability and to make corresponding changes to organizational structures and managerial policies and practices (Thomas, 1990).

The arguments for more attention on diversity and multiculturalism in the curriculum have been well documented in higher education (Applebaum, 2002; Day and Glick, 2000; Siegel, 2003; Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995). Diversity is widely recognized as a particularly important component of public affairs education (NASPAA, 2000; Rice, 2004; Tschirhart and Wise, 2002; White, 2004). Students in our programs represent increasingly diverse backgrounds, and they must be prepared to function effectively in a workplace characterized by greater diversity among coworkers and the publics served.

The students in public administration programs have been characterized as “a mosaic of nationalities, races, social classes, ethnic groups and lifestyles” (Rich 2005, 3). In 2002-2003, approximately 26,000 master’s degree students were enrolled in public administration, public policy, and public affairs programs, and 8,000 of those were receiving degrees (NASPAA, 2004). Of those graduating, 15 percent were African American, 12 percent were citizens of other countries,
6 percent were Hispanic, 5 percent were Asian Americans, and 1 percent were Native American (NASPAA, 2004). The traditional dimensions of diversity, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and class, have been expanded to include sexual orientation, age, language, and disability. In addition, the students at many colleges and universities reflect “widely varying backgrounds, previous experiences, interests, learning styles, life patterns, outside commitments, and learning speeds” (Codde, 1996), as well as differences in culture, religion, profession, organizational or team tenure, political party, personality type, functional background, education level, and other demographic, socioeconomic, and psychographic characteristics (Wise and Tschirhart, 2000, 387). In response to changing demographics, curricular and pedagogical changes are warranted in order to meet the needs of diverse students (Castaneda, 2004).

Public affairs students need to develop cultural competence, that is, the ability to respond effectively and respectfully to the challenges and opportunities posed by interacting with people who differ from themselves in terms of culture, language, class, race, ethnic background, religion, and other factors (White, 2004). NASPAA has highlighted the importance of diversity through a variety of mechanisms, including the requirement of a program-specific diversity plan as part of the accreditation process, the collection and dissemination of statistics regarding diversity among students, graduates, and faculty, and the hosting of numerous panels and presentations on diversity during the annual conferences. The NASPAA Diversity Report (NASPAA, 2000) presents a range of diversity issues related to students, faculty, teaching, research, service, and internationalization within our programs. A recurrent theme is that public administration educators have a professional responsibility to prepare students to work effectively in an environment that is and will continue to be characterized by diversity (Rice, 2004). Diversity courses are one way to foster such competence (White, 2004).

Despite the recognition of its importance, coverage of diversity in the public affairs curriculum does not always reflect the full range of diversity groups, nor does it reach all students. Courses on the topics of race and ethnicity are the most common form of diversity offerings, yet, according to baseline data presented in the NASPAA Diversity Report, even these courses were reported to be part of the curricula in fewer than half of public affairs programs (NASPAA, 2000). Courses on gender, multiculturalism, disability, and sexual orientation were less frequently available (NASPAA, 2000). Additionally, few programs require courses on diversity. While one-third to one-half of programs indicated that they offered courses addressing some aspect of diversity or multiculturalism, fewer than 10 percent include those courses as required curriculum components. Instead, diversity and multiculturalism are discussed as topics within more general core courses, such as human resource management, or in elective courses (NASPAA, 2000).

More recent studies suggest that, despite some advances, many students in public affairs programs may still complete their degrees with limited exposure
to issues of diversity within their programs of study. In a study of the top 20 MPA programs in the nation, White (2004) found that fewer than half covered some aspect of diversity or cultural competence in their curricula, and those that did tended to do so in elective rather than core courses. In their comparison of the coverage of diversity within the public affairs and law programs on the same campus of a large university, Pitts and Wise (2004) observed that the public affairs program had a larger number of elective courses that addressed topics of diversity and exposed a slightly larger percentage of their students to diversity topics, but offered fewer diversity courses per year and reached only one-fifth of the students in their program. White (2004) found that the topics covered in MPA courses on diversity focused on issues of race, gender, and ethnicity more than religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Pitts and Wise (2004), using a slightly different categorization scheme for evaluating the diversity content of courses, observed that the public affairs program exposed students to issues related to either social class diversity or cultural diversity more than issues of racial diversity, gender diversity, or diversity of ability. Both studies reinforce the findings of the NASPAA Diversity Report (2000), which noted that, despite the recognized importance of preparing public affairs students to work effectively with diversity, little has been done to reflect that need in many program curricula.

Obstacles to Teaching Diversity in Public Affairs Programs

The explanations offered for the paucity of diversity courses in public affairs programs are telling. The NASPAA Diversity Report identified “lack of faculty knowledge, lack of student interest, and absence of materials” as the major barriers to incorporating issues of race/ethnicity into the curriculum (NASPAA 2000, 32). A contributing factor to faculty unease and student disinterest may be the increasing diversity among students. Students from diverse backgrounds may differ widely in their values, their views about members of other groups, and their knowledge of and experience with people who differ from them. Some students have traveled extensively and have experienced a variety of cultures and communities, and others have led very sheltered lives. Some have strong prejudices that may or may not be acknowledged, and others are very open to difference. Based on their current work situations and/or career aspirations, some aspects of diversity may be more relevant than others to particular students. If the course is taught online, the students may live in very different communities contributing to different priorities for the knowledge and skill sets they would like to obtain as part of the course. Additionally, discussions on some aspects of diversity can generate emotional responses from students, causing faculty members to feel “uncomfortable with discussions of race and ethnicity” (NASPAA 2000, 32).

As faculty, we are also limited by our own biases, experiences, characteristics, and disciplinary training. Historically, doctoral programs in the various disciplines from which public affairs faculty hail have not had strong diversity com-
ponents, so it should come as no surprise that many faculty feel they are “not capable of teaching the subject” (NASPAA, 2000, 32). The lack of formal training may be compounded by the lack of an established curriculum for teaching diversity. In addition, there is a shortage of teaching and learning resources to assist educators who prepare current and future managers for an increasingly diverse work world (Gallos et al., 1997). This lack of materials for teaching courses on diversity is gradually being addressed; however, the materials that do exist may only serve to further confuse and frustrate faculty who are new to the subject, because there is no consensus on diversity course content. Significant differences exist between the nondiscrimination, valuing difference, and managing diversity approaches (Gardenswartz and Rowe, 1998). Questions about whether the course should focus on traditional dimensions of diversity or address a multitude of individual differences, about whether the course should educate students about the contributions diverse groups have made to society or should get them to engage in social action, and about whether the course should inform students of demographic trends and current laws or about strategies for achieving enhanced “organizational efficiency and effectiveness…from the interaction of individuals who vary in their degree of heterogeneity” (Wise and Tschirhart, 2000, 387) can make the task of teaching a course on diversity seem overwhelming.

It is in this context that I advocate for the use of learning contracts as an instructional strategy for teaching courses on about diversity. Faculty unease about teaching courses on diversity can be overcome, and student interest can be heightened, through the use of this method, which shares the responsibility for learning in a structured, rigorous, and individualized manner. In addition to these practical justifications for using learning contracts, I present two normative arguments. First, learning contracts are appropriate when dealing with adult learners. The students in graduate public affairs are and should be treated as adults. The use of learning contracts recognizes that the students have different learning needs in the context of diversity, that they can take responsibility for locating many of their own materials, and that they have much to contribute. Finally, and arguably most importantly, the learning contract process demonstrates and models a behavior that is particularly appropriate in courses on diversity: treating diversity as an asset that can be utilized to the benefit of the whole class, rather than as a challenging obstacle to be overcome or controlled.

Making the Case for Learning Contracts

Learning contracts are an instructional tool designed to encourage self-directed learning and to allow for individualized selection of topics, techniques, and evaluation criteria without sacrificing academic rigor. Within parameters established by the course instructor, students identify their own learning objectives, the strategies and resources they will use to achieve those objectives, the number and type of deliverables or activities they will use to demonstrate their new...
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knowledge and skills, a timeline for completion, and the criteria the instructor will use to evaluate the quality of the work. Although initially developed for use in independent study programs (Knowles 1980), learning contracts are now used in formal academic courses, particularly within professional degree programs, as a means of placing greater responsibility on students for planning and carrying out their own learning and as a way to accommodate their individual differences (Knowles, 1980; Knowles, 1986). When applied to professional education, learning contracts support the concept that “preparation for a successful career lies both in the content of education received and the process itself” (Day and Glick, 2000, 351).

Practical Justifications: Learning Contracts to Overcome Faculty Unease and Student Disinterest

Learning contracts reduce the faculty member’s burden as “the expert” in the subject of diversity. The role of the faculty member shifts from being one of conveying information to one of providing an academic environment that treats students as individuals and encourages their learning and active participation (Chism, 1994; Codde, 1996). This does not remove from the faculty the responsibility for educating themselves on issues of diversity prior to teaching the course; public affairs faculty have a responsibility to develop their own cultural competence if they are to effectively prepare current and future public administrators. In the context of a course on diversity, even one that utilizes learning contracts, faculty still need to be able to identify useful self-assessment instruments to aid students in determining their own learning needs related to diversity, select appropriate foundation readings, and evaluate the quality of the learning contract proposals submitted by individual students. Faculty establish the general boundaries of the course and provide some structure and oversight of the learning process, but they are no longer solely responsible for determining the entire course content, developing the assignments and exams, establishing the grading criteria, and directing the learning. As such, the faculty member does not have to decide whether a traditional or broad definition of diversity is appropriate for the course. Rather, the faculty need only ensure that students understand that the definition of diversity is open to debate and then let each student determine for themselves what definition to use. Similarly, the instructor does not have to select among a non-discrimination, valuing diversity, or managing for diversity approach to the course. Instead, the instructor can assign readings that present those alternative perspectives, facilitate some discussion among students, and then allow individual student learning needs and interests to dictate which approach each student emphasizes.

The same characteristics of learning contracts that minimize the faculty member’s burden for developing comprehensive expertise in an entirely new area are the characteristics that enhance the potential for student interest in diversity.

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courses. A contributing factor to the lack of student interest may be the diversity of students in our programs, which makes it difficult to select course content and methods that are equally relevant and interesting to all. It is not realistic to assume that we can accommodate increasingly diverse needs in a traditional course design. Responding to the needs of diverse students requires attention on process as well as content (Castaneda, 2004; Chism, 1994; Tschirhart and Wise, 2002; Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995). One of the primary benefits of learning contracts is that they make learning more relevant. They allow learning to be tailored to the specific needs and interests of different learners, and learners can use them to develop specific skills or competencies relevant to their own field of work (Anderson et al., 1996).

Normative Justifications: Learning Contracts to Respond to Adult Learners and Model Diversity Management

In addition to the practical justifications for the use of learning contracts as a means for responding to the reasons identified by faculty for the lack of diversity course offerings, there are also some normative considerations. Learning contracts should be used in courses on diversity because they are appropriate for the audience and the subject matter. That is, they are designed to meet the unique and diverse learning needs of adults, and they model behavior that recognizes, values, and manages for diversity.

Given the large number of in-career master’s degree students in public administration, there is a need for greater attention to teaching strategies appropriate for adult learners (Frederickson 2004, 87). Adults learners are presumed to be better able and more interested in helping to direct their own learning in a way that acknowledges and values different experiences and facilitates connections between theory and practice (Schroth et al., 1999). Learning contracts were developed as part of the movement toward recognizing that adult learners differ from children in their educational preferences and priorities.

Traditional theories of pedagogy emphasize clear differences in the roles played by the instructor and student, and they place the instructor alone in the position of authority and expertise. As the “art and science of teaching children,” pedagogy is premised on the notion that teaching is about transmitting knowledge and skills from teacher to student (White, 2000, 70). Beginning in the 1920s, educators recognized that there were problems with teaching adults in a pedagogical fashion (Codde, 1996). Adults want more than mere knowledge; they want meaningful, relevant, and interesting learning. Malcolm Knowles coined the term “andragogy” to refer to an alternative education philosophy for adult education in which roles and responsibilities are shared by the instructor (now more of a facilitator) and the students (Codde, 1996; Knowles, 1980; Knowles, 1986; White, 2000). The guiding principles of an andragogic approach are that learning is self-directed, based on the learner’s unique experiences, geared to the
Teaching Courses on Managing Diversity: Using Learning Contracts

learner’s readiness to learn, organized around life tasks or problems, and connected to intrinsic motivations of the learner (Anderson et al., 1996; Codde, 1996; Knowles, 1980; Knowles, 1986). Learning contracts are a logical part of an andragogical approach.

The adult learner argument for learning contracts can be applied to a multitude of courses in a public affairs program; however, an additional justification is specific to courses on managing diversity: if we accept that government is obligated to model positive diversity management and that public administration programs have a responsibility to prepare future public servants to fulfill this obligation (Wise and Tshirhart, 2000), a logical extension of that argument is that public administration educators should model positive diversity management.

One way to do so is in the classroom. In arguing for greater attention to issues of social equity and diversity in the public administration curriculum, Rice (2004) asserts that “traditional methods, processes, and teachings are not compatible with the constructs and realities of the time” (143). More specifically, he argues that failure to include topics such as social equity and diversity in the curriculum will hamper students’ abilities to “manage and work in public organizations in a contemporary multicultural society” (143) and that teaching that emphasizes paradigms of traditional bureaucratic culture will impede students’ abilities to be responsive to an increasingly diverse citizenry (145). Although Rice’s primary focus is on the content of teaching, the same reasoning can be applied to the methodology; that is, an instructional methodology that is teacher-centered, highly controlled, and focused on transmitting facts does not prepare students to engage in more participatory and culturally sensitive strategies as public administrators.

The traditional instructional method assumes, explicitly or implicitly, that “all students should be exposed to identical experiences and cover the same material in the same way” so their learning and performance can be “compared, measured and certified” (Anderson and Boud, 1996, 224). Yet this is in stark contrast to what diversity courses aim to teach. In recognition that instructional strategies are not “value, cultural or gender neutral” (Rich, 2005, 9), we must acknowledge that teaching students to effectively manage for diversity is not simply about selecting the appropriate content, it is also about the instructional methods chosen for the course.

We need to “practice what we teach” (Newman, 1996) and select methods that complement and demonstrate the message we hope to convey, rather than contradict that message. When instructors select the content, establish the delivery modes, and set the evaluation criteria, we advantage some students and disadvantage others (Rich, 2005; Tschirhart and Wise, 2002). If the behaviors we model are that the instructor knows what is best for others and uses his or her position to establish and impose all goals, procedures and standards, the message we convey is that once students graduate and assume positions of power they can be the ones to make those decisions for others. If, on the other hand, we model behaviors
in the classroom that demonstrate that we recognize and value differences and that we can achieve legitimate and appropriate ends through a variety of means, students may be better prepared to apply those same principles to their jobs as public administrators when interacting with diverse co-workers, employees, citizens, and clients.

As part of courses on managing for diversity, we may expect that students will expand their understanding of difference, their appreciation for difference, and their willingness and ability to take steps to allow differences to contribute to an organization. We hope that they will go on to institute organizational, policy, and structural changes in their places of work to respond to diversity among employees and populations served. If we are not willing to model that behavior, is it realistic for us to expect they will do it just because we tell them they should? Using learning contracts to individualize the education process rather than requiring the same assignments of all students demonstrates an openness to diversity and difference and provides a model of how to allow differences to contribute to a collective whole.

Learning contracts are the equivalent of applying a managing for diversity approach to the classroom. They “can foster an awareness of individual and cultural differences” (Anderson et al., 1996, 12), and they allow the instructor to demonstrate how an organization, or in this case a classroom and everyone in it, will be changed by the diversity of its members and can be more effective because of it. Through this process we can demonstrate that different experiences, learning styles, and beliefs all have value and can contribute to the learning process. The method by which messages about diversity are conveyed can have an even greater influence than the message itself (Brown, 2004). Thus, learning contracts can be a type of “culturally responsive pedagogy” that “(1) respects diversity, (2) engages the motivation of all learners, (3) creates a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment, (4) derives teaching practices from principles that cross disciplines and cultures, and (5) promotes justice and equity in society” (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995, xii).

Learning contracts facilitate excitement about learning because the learning is relevant and it is not imposed from outside. As such, they promote “deep approaches to learning” (Anderson et al., 1996, 9) in which the student is motivated to continue investigating a topic after the course ends and to continue to engage in strategies designed to improve knowledge and skills even after the assessment is complete. This is particularly appropriate when examining issues of diversity, because “[l]earning about diversity in all its forms is a lifelong undertaking” (Gallos et al., 1997, 105).

THE LEARNING CONTRACT PROCESS

For those who are persuaded that the learning contract may be a valuable instructional tool, I provide some instruction and advice on their use. Books and
articles on learning contracts are widely available, so my emphasis is on the application of learning contracts in courses on managing diversity. As such, I limit the discussion of each step of the learning contract process to a brief description and give more attention to how that step fits within the context of teaching courses on diversity.

The learning contract process is typically presented as consisting of eight steps. Students 1) diagnose their learning needs, 2) specify their learning objectives, 3) identify learning resources and strategies, 4) indicate what evidence of accomplishment they will produce, 5) specify how the evidence will be evaluated, 6) review the contract with others, 7) carry out the tasks, and 8) evaluate their own learning (Knowles, 1986). Some instructions on the use of learning contracts simplify the process and reduce the number of steps (e.g., Anderson et al., 1996, Wloskowski and Ginsberg, 1995); they focus solely on the written contract document rather than on the entire process in which the learning contract is utilized. Streamlined versions generally omit the first step, in which the students diagnose their individual learning needs, and assume that the final two steps (carrying out the project and reflecting on the learning) will occur without explicit mention.

In my experience, an expanded 12-step process is more effective. I add, near the beginning of the process, a step in which I present the rationale for learning contracts in the context of my objectives for the course, and I require the completion and discussion of a common set of readings and assignments on diversity. I also add two steps near the end of the process: one in which students are required to share their experiences with their classmates and one in which I evaluate each student’s work prior to their own self-evaluation. My expanded version of the learning contract process is presented in Table 1 and each step is discussed below.

**Step 1: Provide a Rationale.** Learning contracts need to be carefully introduced and supported, not just used in an instrumental fashion (Anderson and Boud, 1996). Students sometimes react with anxiety, confusion, resistance, and even resentment at being asked to do what they perceive to be the instructor’s job. It is important to provide detailed guidelines for the development of learning contracts and to discuss the rationale as well as the process (O’Donnell and Caffarella, 1990). During the first class meeting, I generally devote some time to the topic of adult learning and the rationale for the use of learning contracts in the course, and I list recommended readings on these subjects in the syllabus. I articulate my objectives for the course, identify the knowledge and skills I intend for all students to have at the end of the course, and explain how I expect learning contracts to help facilitate those objectives.

I have found it essential to provide very clear guidelines for developing learning contracts and to provide samples of sections of learning contracts for students to see the range of possibilities. I provide students with examples of a multitude of acceptable learning objectives, learning strategies, deliverables, and evaluation criteria; however, I do not provide them with any complete learning contracts. I
Table 1. The Learning Contract Process for Courses on Diversity

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| 1. | **Provide a Rationale**  
The instructor explains the why learning contracts are being used, how they are relevant in courses on diversity, and the steps of the process. |
| 2. | **Facilitate Self-assessments**  
The instructor facilitates student completion of self-assessment instruments to help students diagnose their learning needs related to diversity. |
| 3. | **Establish a Common Background**  
The instructor assigns some common readings on demographic trends, existing laws and policies, and approaches to diversity to provide students with a baseline of information from which they can work. |
| 4. | **Specify Learning Objectives**  
Students specify their learning objectives based on their learning needs and in the context of the general course objectives. |
| 5. | **Identify Resources and Strategies**  
Students identify the how they intend to acquire the knowledge and skills listed in their learning objectives. |
| 6. | **Activities and Deliverables**  
Students indicate what they will submit as evidence of accomplishment. |
| 7. | **Evaluation Criteria**  
Students develop detailed evaluation criteria and specify a timeline for completion of each task. |
| 8. | **Obtain Approvals**  
Students submit the written contract, which includes explanations of items 4 through 7, and obtain the instructor approval and signature. |
| 9. | **Implementation**  
Students carry out the tasks identified in item 5 and submit the deliverables listed in item 6. |
| 10. | **Sharing and Collective Learning**  
Students share their experiences with others in the class, with an emphasis on how their experiences contribute to the broader understanding of how to work effectively in a diverse environment. |
| 11. | **Instructor Evaluation**  
The instructor evaluates each student’s learning according to the individualized evaluation criteria specified in each contract. |
| 12. | **Self-reflection**  
Students reflect on their learning and evaluate their work. Students also reflect on the learning contract process. |
strongly advise against the distribution of one complete sample learning contract, as it may be interpreted as a template to be followed rather than a sample. I do not want students to simply copy what another student has done, but rather to see a range of diverse and equally acceptable options.

The learning contract process involves considerable give and take between the instructor and student. The process of negotiation between the student and the instructor ensures that academic rigor is maintained, that objectives are reasonable (that is, sufficiently challenging and yet doable), that the project is appropriate for the course, and that adequate resources will be available. The issue of what is negotiable and what is not must be clearly addressed early on. Students unfamiliar with contracts will welcome the boundaries that limit or guide their initial planning (Anderson and Boud, 1996, 223). I let students know that they have many options, including work-related projects for in-service students and team projects for those who are interested, but that the learning contracts will have to contain certain key provisions and that the activities and deliverables will need to meet standards of academic rigor and relevance to the course. As such, work-related projects will require approvals of the contract and evaluation of the deliverables by a practitioner supervisor, but this in addition to, not in place of, my approval and evaluation as the course instructor. I also provide the option of team-based learning contract projects for some activities; however, each student must develop individualized learning objectives, some individualized deliverables, and their own evaluation criteria. I make it clear to students that this is an opportunity for them to tailor their learning, not an opportunity to avoid learning.

Step 2: Facilitate Self-Assessments. The second step in the learning contract process is to have each student diagnose their learning needs to identify the gap between where the student is now and where they would like to be in regard to a particular set of competencies (Knowles 1986, 28). In the absence of some structured self-assessment exercises at the beginning of the course, students may not able to determine what they need to learn (Anderson et al., 1996). In general, this begins with competency assessment or competency profiling (MacNamara, 1998). This often includes general assessments of written or verbal communication skills, but in a course on managing diversity this should also involve assessing their current status of cultural competence. Self-assessment exercises are useful at this stage to determine students’ interests, current levels of knowledge and understanding, and range of experiences related to diversity. A variety of self-assessment tools and exercises are available. I like to have students develop an awareness of their racial identity and that of others in the class using a process described by Kulik (1998) and to assess their beliefs and stereotypes about difference using exercises designed by the Southern Poverty Law Center (www.tolerance.org). In addition to the traditional skill assessments and cultural competence assessments, I also find it useful to gather information on students’ professional interests and aspirations. Knowing each student’s preferred sector, geographical region, and substan-
tive policy interests allows me to help them identify ways to tailor their projects to best meet their career goals. The instructor’s role at this stage is to make the assessment instruments available, to assist in interpretation of the results, and to probe for possible activities that the student might be interested in pursuing and that would address their learning needs.

Step 3: Establish a Common Baseline. Much of the research and reading that students do throughout the semester will be individualized and based on their learning contracts, but I do not want my courses on diversity to dissipate into a series of individualized study projects. To maintain an appropriate balance, the learning contract is a substantial component of the course, but it is not the entire course. Used in this way, the learning contract lies "somewhere along a continuum which has a totally prescribed task at one end and a fully independent, self-directed learning activity at the other" (Anderson et al., 1996, 5).

I make sure that we begin the semester with a common baseline of readings that provide foundation information on demographic trends, existing laws and policies, and alternative approaches to diversity. As part of this process, I have students brainstorm collectively about diversity challenges facing organizations, jurisdictions, and communities of which they are aware. I also have students complete a series of short assignments in which they gather information on the diversity characteristics of local communities and organizations, and they share that information in class. We use this information as the basis for discussing the types of knowledge and skills needed by individuals and by organizations to respond effectively to increasing diversity.

Step 4: Specify Learning Objectives. Once individual learning needs have been identified and students have a baseline understanding of some of the fundamental issues surrounding diversity, each student needs to identify specific learning objectives. I meet individually with students to talk about the intersection of the results of their assessments from step 2 and the ideas generated by the class readings and assignments in step 3. At this stage students should indicate what knowledge or skills they hope to acquire, without worrying about what they will do in order to acquire them (Knowles, 1986, 29). I have found that it is sometimes necessary to insist that students challenge themselves to develop knowledge and skills they do not already have, and I evaluate each potential learning objective against that standard and the requirement that it be related to their ability to respect difference and work effectively amidst diversity.

Each student lists learning objectives in the form of the knowledge, skills and/or abilities they intend to obtain as a result of their project. These learning objectives are presented in terms of how acquiring that new knowledge or skill will address a need and how it will help that students improve personally and professionally. I require students to justify their learning contract projects in terms of the intersection of their self-assessments, professional goals, and diversity needs. Table 2 presents sample learning objectives developed by students in my courses.
on managing diversity with reference to the corresponding learning needs identified through the assessment process.

**Step 5: Identify Resources and Strategies.** Students frequently “differ in the resources they prefer to use, the conditions under which they learn best, and their information processing style as well as personal abilities and characteristics” (O’Donnell and Caffarella, 1990, 138). With that in mind, the learning contract process

### Table 2: Sample Learning Objectives Linked to Self-Assessment Results

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Based On—</th>
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| 1. To become more familiar with Mexican-American culture and to be able to better distinguish myths from facts so that I can work more effectively in the community and avoid prejudicial behaviors.  
2. To improve my ability to communicate effectively and respectfully with individuals for whom English is not their primary language so I will not be so frustrated when I deal with people who do not speak English. | A preservice student with strong stereotypical views of Mexican Americans. |
| 1. To learn how law enforcement agencies in other jurisdictions and other public agencies in male-dominated professions have effectively addressed the problem of sexual harassment so I can help my own department improve.  
2. To better equip myself to prevent and respond to allegations of sexual harassment in the workplace. | A police officer with administrative aspirations who was working in an police department with a history of sexual harassment. |
| 1. To learn about the multiple cultures represented in [the community] and the trends in race, ethnicity, and national origin so I can help local agencies and officials plan for current and future needs.  
2. To develop skills in communicating across cultural and language differences so I can work effectively as the executive director of [organization]. | A mid-career student who just moved to the area to take a position as director of a local nonprofit and who was quickly confronted with how little she knew about the cultural history and values of the people the organization served. |
| 1. To learn how XYZ country and the United States differ in terms of in- and out-migration patterns so I better understand both countries.  
2. To determine what each country can learn from the experiences of the other. | A preservice international student planning to return to his home country with little knowledge of aspects of diversity in the United States. |
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allows the student to identify how they will acquire knowledge and skills rather than the instructor assigning tasks to achieve learning objectives. Each student must specify what material and human resources they plan to use, and what techniques and tools they will apply to get the most out of them (Knowles, 1986). The student identifies the process or processes that will be used to acquire the knowledge and skills identified in the learning objectives. This might include conducting library research or web searches, readings books and articles, interviewing public officials or residents of a community, gathering data through a survey, attending workshops or seminars, or engaging in community service. Table 3 presents some sample strategies and resources developed by students in my courses on managing diversity.

Step 6: Activities and Deliverables. The sixth component of the learning contract process is to specify what evidence of accomplishment will be provided to demonstrate that the intended learning has occurred. These are essentially alterna-

Table 3. Sample Strategies and Resources

| • Conduct face-to-face interviews with heads of all state cabinet-level agencies regarding perceptions of diversity and agency priorities. |
| • Read state agency strategic plans to assess priority of diversity. |
| • Conduct a diversity audit of my own agency. |
| • Conduct a library and Web search of literature on diversity initiatives in public agencies. |
| • Review federal and state laws and court cases pertaining to nondiscrimination in hiring to determine what is and is not allowed in the recruitment, screening, and selection processes. |
| • Conduct a review of the literature on best diversity practices in recruitment and hiring. |
| • Review hard copy and online job announcement and application materials for public and private organizations. |
| • Review Web sites of organizations identified by various “minority” magazines as the best employers for various groups (gays, single parents, blacks, Hispanics) |
| • Volunteer five hours per week of service at community center in a minority neighborhood. |
| • Learn how to take oral histories by reading about the method and talking with faculty in the history department who engage in this type of research. |
| • Take oral histories from at least five first-generation immigrants in the community who have lived here at least 20 years. |
tives to tests (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) and they can take a multitude of forms. A student may organize a workshop, make a presentation, prepare a report, analyze data, develop an annotated bibliography, draft a policy, design a brochure, create a museum display, design and implement a survey, or complete a cost-benefit analysis (Knowles, 1986, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995). I generally allow a fall-back option of producing a traditional research paper for the learning contract deliverables, but this must be justified within the context of their individual professional goals, their self-assessments, and statements about how this paper will address the diversity challenges identified by the class in step 3. Table 4 presents some sample deliverables from learning contracts developed by students in my courses on managing diversity.

**Step 7: Evaluation Criteria.** In my experience, the seventh step is one of the hardest parts of the learning contract process for students. Here they are required

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<th>Table 4. Sample Activities and Deliverables</th>
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<td>- Compile oral histories into a format that can be used in subsequent offerings of this class as well as other courses that present myths and stereotypes versus facts and real stories of people in the community.</td>
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<td>- Write a report for the board of directors of a local nonprofit on the challenges and priorities of new minority groups in the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Produce a video segment in three languages targeted to new residents of the community for airing on the public access station that introduces officials, agencies, services, and segments of the community. Prepare an accompanying pamphlet available in three additional languages.</td>
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<td>- Compile and develop all materials needed to conduct a diversity training session at work. Schedule and conduct the training session with existing employees. Gather evaluations from participants to determine revisions that should be made before offering the workshop to other departments in the county.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Provide documentation from community center director on number of volunteer hours worked.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conduct a workshop on cross-cultural communication for counselors and teachers in the high school where I teach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Prepare a report for the director of human resources, the city manager, and the city council on the costs and benefits of an expanded employee benefit package that would recognize domestic partners. Make a presentation to the HR director and other officials based on the findings presented in the report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Develop a Web site for a small nonprofit that demonstrates the diversity of their staff and their commitment to diversity in their service provision, and arrange to have the site linked to related organizations.</td>
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to specify how the evidence will be validated and evaluated. That is, they must specify the grading criteria that will be applied by the instructor to assess the quality of the work they submit. The more detailed the criteria the better, as it leaves less room for subjectivity and misunderstandings. Because we are not relying on traditional tests to assess knowledge and skills, the instructor should review the assessment criteria to ensure that they are valid, reliable, and will allow evaluation of that particular student’s work (Boak, 1998). This is often the part of the learning contract where students demonstrate the most resistance; many want simply to defer to the instructor’s discretion. It is important to insist that they establish evaluation criteria so there is no doubt about what constitutes ‘A,’ ‘B,’ ‘C,’ or ‘F’ quality work.

Although the ultimate goal for the course is to have students enhance their cultural competence, this is a difficult concept to evaluate for a grade. As a result, most of the grading is based on quantitative assessments of traditional skills, such as writing or presentations. I encourage students to include diversity-specific evaluation criteria wherever possible. I have not provided samples of the evaluation criteria in a separate table because the descriptions tend to be lengthy; instead, I provide some general guidelines based on my experience.

I have learned not to allow students to state simply “the report is worth 70% of the project grade, and the presentation is worth 30%,” or even that “the report is to be graded with equal weight placed on content and written clarity” or “the presentation should be graded based on content, appropriate length, professional attire and speech, and ability to respond to questions.” I insist on descriptive details about the standards to be applied when grading. If the grade will be based, in any part, on hours worked, the student needs to specify the minimum and target number of hours per week s/he will volunteer, how s/he will document those hours, and how hours worked translate into grades. For written documents, students must indicate, for example, how many grammatical, spelling, punctu- tion or typographical errors are allowed for a grade of ‘A’ (zero), ‘B’ (no more than three in the entire report), ‘C’ (between three and 10) or ‘F’ (an average of one per page). Similar grading criteria can be applied to the presence of language in a document that reflects a lack of sensitivity to different groups. If the student intends to make a presentation or conduct a workshop, I have them submit the evaluation (survey) instrument that will be used at the end of the presentation or workshop to get participant/attendee feedback. I will insist that some of the survey questions specifically address issues of diversity and the respondents’ assessment of how well the student addressed those issues. The student must also specify how participant ratings translate into grades.

For each task the student identifies as part of the learning process, a deadline for completion must be listed. I establish a deadline for submission and approval of the learning contract document (which includes steps 4 through 8), but the student determines deadlines for completing the tasks. In setting the deadline for
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the contract, I have found it necessary to allocate time for negotiation. I generally allow several weeks for students to develop the contract and leave the remainder of the semester for completion of the tasks.

Students must provide a timeline for completion of each of their tasks and the submission of each deliverable. I require students to set target dates throughout the semester for the completion of tasks within their overall project. I do not allow the entire project to rest on a single end-of-the-semester deadline. The dates should be flexible, but not ignored completely; the student should stipulate in the learning contract which deadlines are firm and which are more flexible. There needs to be some flexibility in meeting deadlines when circumstances beyond a student’s control contribute to delays, but all changes must be approved.

**Step 8: Obtain Approvals.** A learning contract is not developed in isolation. Drafts of the document should be reviewed by classmates and the instructor and, in the case of work-based projects, by practitioners. Classmates, practitioners, and the instructor can provide feedback and offer suggestions. Constructive feedback throughout the process is essential. Constructive feedback is informational rather than controlling, based on agreed-upon standards, specific and constructive, prompt and frequent (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995). The role of the instructor is to negotiate, guide, and challenge, but not impose.

The student and the instructor (and the third party, if applicable) should sign and date the contract indicating agreement to its provisions. In principle and in practice, the contract must be open to renegotiation. In response to changing levels of student awareness, time constraints imposed by third parties, and other considerations, various provisions of the learning contract may have to change. Everything in the contract, including the learning objectives, is negotiable, but I require that all changes to the contract be made in writing. I enforce this by reminding students that the approved learning contract provides me with the basis for evaluating their work and assigning a grade. Failure to update their contract may result in a lower grade if the new deliverables and deadlines do not correspond to the agreed-upon contract provisions.

**Step 9: Implementation.** Preparation of the learning contract is a worthwhile exercise; however, it is not the goal in and of itself. The steps taken to develop the learning contract are simply the precursor to carrying out the contract. Thus, the ninth step in the process is to implement the contract. Students must utilize the resources and strategies they identified, complete their tasks, and submit the promised deliverables for evaluation. This process generally extends over the entire semester, although I insist on a final deadline for submission of deliverables at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester to allow adequate time for the remaining three steps.

**Step 10: Sharing and Collective Learning.** Throughout the process, I look for opportunities for students to share their ideas and experiences with each other during class meetings. During class sessions, we discuss issues related to each student’s
project. I ask students to identify readings they have located that they think
would be of interest to their classmates, and we discuss those on designated dates.
I regularly have students report on their progress to put pressure on them to make
progress every week. I let students know that what they share with their class-
mates may be related to what they are learning, how they are feeling, or with what
they are struggling. In this way, the learning contract projects are an integral part
of the course and contribute to our collective learning; they are not simply a series
of discrete individual activities. Near the end of the semester, we look for common
themes and notable differences among the students’ collective experiences, and we
discuss how the individual projects can, when considered as a whole, contribute to
our understanding of and ability to work effectively with diversity.

Step 11: Instructor Evaluation. When the learning contract activities and projects
are completed, it is time for the instructor to evaluate each student’s learning
according to the criteria specified in the learning contract. When evaluating the
student’s work, it is essential that you refer back to the contract as the basis for
the grading criteria. Before examining any student’s deliverables, I re-read the
learning contract to ensure that I will focus on the agreed-upon criteria.

Step 12: Student Reflection. Because one of the goals of adult learning strategies,
in general, and learning contracts, in particular, is for the individual to develop
an appreciation for lifelong and self-directed learning, the process is not com-
plete until the student reflects on and evaluates for themselves the learning that
has occurred. This is particularly important in a course on diversity in which I,
as the instructor, cannot quantify and grade some of the more internal aspects of
their cultural competency development.

I ask students to look back at the results of their initial self-assessments and to
reflect on the extent to which their views have changed and skills have improved
based on new knowledge and experience. I have experimented with placing this
step of the process prior to my evaluation so their assessment is not biased by
my judgment of the quality of their work, and I think that this is a legitimate
modification to the process. I have found, however, that concluding with self
reflection highlights the importance of their own assessments of their work and
better reflects the ideal of continuous learning. My evaluation will be the basis
for their grades in the course, but I hope that their own assessments will have a
more permanent impact.

Student feedback on the use of learning contracts in my courses on diversity
has been notable in two respects. First, I have observed a general pattern of
resistance early in the process, followed by an appreciation for the process and
the value of diversity upon reflection. The most dramatic transformations occur
in the students who are most hostile to the idea when it is first introduced. Even
though it no longer surprises me, I continue to feel a sense of satisfaction when
I hear students say in class or I read in their course evaluations such things as “I
thought this was going to be a waste of time and a lot touchy-feely stuff, but I
really learned a lot and I am glad I had to do it” and “I know I complained about having to do so many revisions [of my contract], but it was really a valuable experience to think about what I could do to help myself and my agency” and “thanks for pushing me to recognize how my views of others could hurt me as well as them.” Student feedback has not been universally supportive of learning contracts. Some have complained that the process involves more work that they would ordinarily be required to perform, and that they miss the structure and logical sequence of learning associated with a typical seminar.

The second aspect of feedback stems not from the course itself, but from my later interaction with students who have used learning contracts in the course. When I have had these students in subsequent classes, many have been vocal proponents of the process to students who are hesitant. They are the most effective advocates for the method as they can speak from experience and relate to the anxieties of students who have not yet experienced the process. I have been most impressed when these students have incorporated appreciation for diversity into their arguments in favor of learning contracts, with statements such as “if we each do things based on our own strengths and then share information and perspectives, we can get even more out of the class.”

**General Observations**

I have had the best success when I use learning contracts for a significant portion of the course grade, but not the basis for the entire course grade. Given the mix of pre-service and in-service students found in most MPA programs, a balanced or integrated approach, rather than a strictly pedagogical or andragogical paradigm, is most appropriate for MPA programs (White, 2000). When learning contracts are used for a substantial portion of the course, but not as the sole instructional methodology, they provide a means to achieve that balance. In order to be taken seriously and given sufficient time and attention, the learning contract projects need to be more than just one of many assignments. On the other hand, I do not want the course to become a series of independent study projects without any integration of ideas and interaction among the students. Therefore, discussion of readings, contributions to class discussions, and sharing of experiences regarding the learning contract projects is still essential.

I typically make the contract document itself (comprising steps 4 through 8) worth 15 percent of the grade based on criteria I establish and make it due on a date that I establish. This encourages students to take the process seriously, invest time at the beginning of the semester, and prepare a polished and thoughtful learning contract. The activities and deliverables are worth 60 percent of the course grade and are evaluated based on the criteria identified in the learning contract. The remaining 25 percent of the course grade is based on traditional measures such as exams, class participation, and short assignments.
Learning contracts are not a panacea and they are not without limitations. Teachers and students tend to be uncomfortable with them at first. Instructors must be willing to surrender some control over content and method, and students who are used to having standards imposed may be anxious about how to assume responsibilities for their own learning (Anderson et al., 1996; O’Donnell and Caffarella, 1990). Academic standards may suffer if assessment standards are left entirely to the student, without oversight and input from the instructor (Anderson et al., 1996). The development and use of learning contracts is a time-consuming process of negotiating, facilitating, and supervising learning, and is not suitable for situations in which the learner is completely unfamiliar with the topic and unable to select resources and learning strategies.

The instructor must set boundaries on the types of acceptable learning contract projects and activities. I have found it challenging to remain open to new ideas and approaches while insisting that projects not stray too far from the course objectives or my own standards of academic rigor. Even after using learning contracts repeatedly, I still have to consciously remind myself to treat the negotiation process and all class discussions as an opportunity to appreciate and learn from diversity.

**CONCLUSION**

Learning contracts provide a viable solution to the struggle of accommodating diverse student needs and interests, motivating students with varying levels of experience and different values, and maintaining academic rigor. The learning contract directly involves students in every step of their own learning and facilitates the teaching of topics, such as managing diversity, that are recognized as important but for which the faculty may feel inadequately prepared to provide all instruction. Using learning contracts does not absolve faculty from the duty to develop a sufficient knowledge base on diversity, but the method reduces the pressure on faculty to become diversity experts. The use of this instructional strategy, while effective for a variety of adult education settings and a full range of courses in public affairs programs, is particularly well suited to courses on managing diversity because it models the behaviors and skills for the constructive utilization of diversity that students will find useful in their professional careers.

**REFERENCES**


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Nadia Rubaii-Barrett is an associate professor of public administration at Binghamton University. Her research and teaching interests focus on issues of diversity as they relate to policy, administration, and pedagogy.
Arguing Toward a More Active Citizenry: Re-envisioning the Introductory Civics Course via Debate-Centered Pedagogy

Sarah Ryan
Baruch College

Abstract
As engaging citizens in political activity and debate becomes increasingly difficult, American universities have been encouraged to take the lead in spurring civic discussion and debate, despite the concomitant criticism that universities have failed to create educational climates that welcome divergent viewpoints. Re-envisioning the introductory civics course via debate-centered pedagogy responds to demands for university-led civics education and creates more responsive public administration coursework. Debate-centered courses engage students in current issues, encourage them to draw from their own unique perspectives, and position them as policymakers, thus rekindling their belief that they can effect change. Additionally, as has been shown in numerous contexts, debate-centered pedagogy increases student participation, critical thinking, and engagement.

Fashioning a politically active citizenry is becoming increasingly difficult. In the wake of national disasters and foreign war, the media have suggested that universities take the lead in encouraging civic discussion and debate (Bacow, 2005; Ehrlich, 2003; Vinovskis, 2005). At the same time, American educational institutions are being criticized for their inability to fabricate climates that welcome divergent viewpoints (Brown, 2006; Ensslin, 2005; Leo, 2004; Vinovskis, 2005). Although university speech codes have been targeted as particularly pernicious (Currie, 2005; Goode, 2003; Vinovskis, 2005), the overall climate of academia has been characterized as poorly suited to the needs of a richly diverse student body. The field of public administration has been similarly challenged to refigure itself in an effort to “be more relevant to contemporary students” (Rice,
Today’s students of public affairs are more cynical than ever about the ability of government to effect change (Boyle and Whitaker, 2001; Marshall and Reed, 1999), and are subsequently questioning their own ability to make a difference via political participation (Boyle and Whitaker, 2001). Recently, Rice called for a meaningful incorporation of “the topics of social equity and diversity” into public administration curricula (2004, 153) in order to address the needs of a multicultural student body and to prepare students to engage in a world characterized by heterogeneity (2004). Thus, Mitchell’s call to action supplements the media’s insistence that the university community must lead the way in civics education.

Envisioning the university as the site of citizenship training is an ideal with a long tradition (Colby et. al., 2003; Morse, 1989; Sax, 2004). As Sax noted,

> Although civic education was somewhat deemphasized during the industrialization and educational specialization of the nineteenth century, citizenship reappeared as a priority of higher education through the general education movement of the early twentieth century (2004, 65; see also Sax, 2000).

According to Walter C. Parker, “schools are ideal sites for democratic citizenship education…[because] [t]hey are public congregations of multiple languages, races, religions, ideologies, social classes, and so forth” (2005, 655). The imperative to train responsible students is more essential than ever because of technological innovations, such as biotechnology, that vest the “power to shape future generations’ prospects” in the hands of the educated (Huey-Li, 2005, 42).

Although universities are responding to this challenge via public administration offerings and civics courses, as well as a variety of service-learning and community-building projects (Sax, 2004), university students still remain relatively unengaged in the political process (Sax, 2004). Based on a sample of more than 12,000 undergraduates who participated in a longitudinal study from 1985-1994, Linda J. Sax found that students who had consistent, meaningful interaction with other students and faculty throughout college were more likely to embrace their civic responsibilities both during and after college (2004). Though Sax referenced activities such as attending religious services and participating in extracurricular activities, she noted that two aspects of the experiences were important: they offered students an opportunity to encounter diverse ideas, and they were presented often enough to enable students to form positive habits. Within the field of public affairs, Cunningham, Riverstone, and Roberts have suggested promoting student empowerment and fostering critical questioning habits via “fishing, storytelling, and appreciative inquiry” (2005). At the core of the authors’ propositions was an emphasis on rejecting simple problem-solution methods in favor of open investigations of complex situations. This was also
Arguing Toward a More Active Citizenry: Re-envisioning the Introductory Civics Course

Central to Light’s Indian Gaming technique (2004) and is at the heart of the critically-acclaimed “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy developed at Barnard College (Carnes, 2004; Carnes, 2005). For instructors willing to risk some uncertainty, these practice-based methods not only bring new life to the classroom but also better prepare students for the type of real-world decision-making they will encounter after college. As teaching strategies that encourage liminal thought, these activities “give...[students] freedom to invent new solutions to old problems, or to regard familiar things in new ways” (Carnes, 2004, B8). Additionally, these pedagogies can be tailored so that they provide students the opportunity to serve as policy-makers, providing kinesthetic reinforcement of their ability to implement the public affairs theories that they have been taught. Herein lies the unique benefit of incorporating policy-debate-centered pedagogy into the introductory civics course.

Re-envisioning the introductory civics course via debate-centered pedagogy responds to the media’s demands for university-led civics education and to recent calls for more responsive public administration coursework. Debate-centered courses engage students in current issues, encourage them to draw from their own unique perspectives, and position them as policymakers, thus rekindling their belief that they can effect change. Additionally, as has been shown in numerous contexts, debate-centered pedagogy increases student participation, critical thinking, and engagement (Allen et al., 1995, 1999; Bellon, 2000; Semlak and Shields, 1977). Fine also discovered, in her examination of the New York Urban Debate League.\footnote{2} that students with debate experience demonstrated an increased proclivity for speaking out, because they “[felt that] they [had] something useful to say, and because they [felt] more articulate in saying it” (1999, 61). If a vibrant, active citizenry is what we aim to engender, then utilizing policy debate to teach introductory public administration or civics courses will prove an indispensable piece of the puzzle.

Designing introductory civics courses that allow for student participation in debate activities on a regular basis (weekly, bi-weekly) exposes students to new ideas and helps them develop positive critical thinking habits. Students are exposed to new—and often hotly contested—propositions, and they learn the habit of evaluating numerous competing claims or sides to arguments. By the end of a 10 or 15-week course, students possess both the ability and inclination to debate, and thus become more active, engaged citizens. These students often continue to maintain their critical orientation long after the conclusion of the course.

While such pedagogical successes are celebrated at conferences and on the printed page, innovative teaching strategies often fail to become fully integrated into the average introductory course. One of the reasons that instructors do not utilize these strategies is that they seemingly have not had direct experience with the underlying methodologies or activities. Not every instructor can remember a time in which he or she role-played, for example. However, every instructor has
engaged in argumentation at one time or another, as Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters proclaim with their aptly titled book, *Everything’s an Argument* (2003). Thus, implementing debate-centered pedagogy draws upon existing knowledge and teaching strategies. Additionally, because of their flexibility, debate activities can serve as a useful heuristic for any subject that is being covered and can be designed to accommodate a range of schedules, class sizes, and classroom set-ups. A debate-centered civics course would offer students the chance to regularly engage in a variety of debate activities, ranging from impromptu to formal and involving a diverse mix of debatable controversies and speaking formats.

Classroom debates offer the opportunity to develop four main competencies: oratorical abilities, critical thinking skills, research aptitudes, and teamwork or small group decision-making skills. When choosing from the range of possible debate activities, instructors should decide which skills to emphasize on a given day. This will assist instructors in answering four questions related to the particular debate activity:

1. What type of proposition will be employed?
2. In what level of planning should the students engage prior to the debate?
3. How many participants should be employed on each side of the debate?
4. Should students deliver their presentations individually or as teams of experts?

Some debate structures will emphasize certain skills more than others, as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Aligning Skills with Debate Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Proposition</th>
<th>Levels of Planning</th>
<th># of Participants</th>
<th>Individual vs. Panel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oratory</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Impromptu or planned</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>All, especially policy</td>
<td>Impromptu or planned</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>All, especially policy</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Work</td>
<td>All, especially policy</td>
<td>Impromptu or planned</td>
<td>2-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Propositions

Generally speaking, debate topics or propositions are divided into three categories: propositions of fact, propositions of value, and propositions of policy. Propositions of fact invite participants to debate about terminology or about disputable facts (Rieke, Sillars, and Peterson, 2004; Rybacki and Rybacki, 2003), such as “The United States is a democracy,” or “Rights are always positive.” Propositions of fact offer a way to introduce students to public affairs terminology. It is important to design propositions of fact in such a way that they are still debatable controversies. Statements such as “The White House predicted a $400 billion deficit for 2006,” can be proved true or false via rather effortless research and therefore are not suitable topics for debate even though they are related to questions of fact.

Propositions of value engage students in debates about right and wrong, cultural beliefs, or how to achieve “good” or “moral” ends (Rieke, Sillars, and Peterson, 2004; Rybacki and Rybacki, 2003). Propositions of value often invite participants to weigh competing value claims such as whether liberty or life is more important. Students could debate Patrick Henry’s famous admonition, “Give me liberty or give me death,” for example, via the value proposition, “It is more desirable to have liberty than to have life.” Value propositions are an excellent way to introduce students to concepts such as deontology and utilitarianism. However, it is important to exercise sensitivity when choosing topics so that they do not obviously contradict students’ deeply held religious or cultural beliefs; for example, abortion debates often prove more fractious and upsetting to students than enlightening, thus diminishing their educational value.

Finally, propositions of policy engage students directly in the policy-making process by positioning them on a particular side in a debate over what should be done. Though all three types of propositions serve a purpose within the introductory civics curriculum, policy debate seems to answer most directly the calls for engaging students in activities that will embolden them to take direct action in politics as engaged citizens. Propositions of policy generally involve three components: an actor, an action, and a direct object (or what is acted upon). For example, students could engage in debate on “The U.S. government should abolish income taxes.” In this debate, the federal government would serve as the actor, “should abolish” as the action, and “income taxes” as the object of the government’s action. It is important to note that, although this proposition, or resolution for debate, is worded narrowly enough as to allow for a clear debate of the given topic, the participants still have room to exercise their creativity and strategy. For example, some teams arguing in favor of the proposition might rely on Supreme Court rulings to strike down current income tax formulas as inequitable, whereas others might advocate a Constitutional Amendment to abolish income taxes altogether. Similarly, the students arguing against the proposition might employ a host of arguments related to freedom of property, states’ rights,
etc. The added benefit of utilizing a policy proposition, then, is that it requires additional (creative) critical thinking, research of various alternatives, and, if students are divided into teams, a greater amount of consensus-building around a particular approach to a policy problem.

**Levels of Planning**

The greatest benefit of employing a debate-centered approach to civics courses is that this pedagogy is flexible. A debate can be convened on the spur of the moment when classroom discussion has grown stale, or it can be the result of weeks of careful planning. Often, a mix of impromptu and planned debates is optimal. Additionally, if an instructor wishes to incorporate aspects of liminality, or the role-playing experience that has proved successful for Light (2004) and the dozens of instructors who have implemented the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy (see Carnes, 2004, 2005), a quasi-role-playing debate can be employed. For example, a historical debate in which each participant plays a particular Federalist or Anti-federalist spokesman can be convened.

The level of planning involved in a debate will obviously affect the amount of research, planning, and—when students debate in teams—small-group work that is required. Students may be less reticent to engage in more detailed, planned debates later in the semester if a climate of open debating has been established via the incorporation of impromptu debates earlier in the semester. In order to ensure that both impromptu and planned debates are successful, it is always important to choose debatable controversies and create even, two-sided propositions as described above. Time limits for debates should be set in advance. Debates can be open to the entire class in the form of a quasi-discussion or debate “against” the professor, or certain students can be selected to perform in front of the other students. If only select students and/or teams are participating, each member of the class should still be given a specific responsibility (as notetakers, responders, etc.) Additionally, it is imperative that instructors establish ground rules for debates early in the semester, possibly as an attachment to the syllabus (see Table 2).

Finally, if an instructor chooses to schedule a planned debate in the future, it may be necessary to schedule periodic check-ins with the participating teams to ensure that they are clear about which side of the proposition they are defending and that they are successfully gathering information and crafting quality arguments.

**Number of Participants**

Among the most well-known debates in history are the eight debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas held during the 1858 Illinois state election campaign. Remarkable for their intelligent and well-delivered oratory, these debates have spurred a national competitive high school and college circuit of equally intense one-on-one debates. Though this type of debate maximizes the
development of students’ rhetorical styles and presentation skills, it is rarely suited to the classroom for two reasons. First, it minimizes the number of students who can participate in a given day’s debate activities. Second, it often requires a greater level of oratorical sophistication than that possessed by an average student with no formal debate training. Additionally, good citizenship requires consensus-building, and team debates offer the kind of rich negotiation experience that will serve students well in the workplace and as active citizens.

In competitive policy debate, students are most commonly organized into two- or three-person teams. This number can be increased to accommodate large class sizes, but teams of more than six would no doubt become unmanageable. Additionally, the larger the team, the greater the onus on the instructor to ensure that each member is contributing, either through mediated group meetings or student feedback instruments.

**Individual Speaker or Panel Debates**

Debates can employ formats in which speakers from each team take turns presenting their arguments or in which entire teams are allowed to speak, expert-panel style. Generally, the one-speaker-at-a-time format prevents chaotic outbursts and provides for a predictable experience that bolsters reticent students’ self-esteem. However, the panel option allows for flexibility, especially when teams are well-matched and group participation is actively encouraged and monitored by the instructor. In either case, time limits should still be enforced so that each team has an equal opportunity to make its case. Often, it is good to demarcate the beginning speeches as constructive speeches in which new arguments can be introduced, and the conclusion speeches as rebuttal speeches in which participants may not introduce new arguments. This helps ensure a focused debate. Table 3 offers sample times for a 30-minute classroom debate with six participants.

**Table 2. Sample Rules for Classroom Debates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>You should be supportive of each speaker. Even if someone makes an argument that you don’t personally agree with or understand, you should still be respectfully silent while that person is speaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Only one person may speak at a time. If you wish to disagree with your opponents (if you are part of the debate) or one of the speakers (if you are an audience member), you should hold your comments until the appropriate time. If you are worried you’ll forget your golden argument, write it down!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Each speaker and audience member should respect the time limits set for the debate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Each member of the audience should provide written comments for the speakers. Constructive criticism should be offered to assist the speakers in better preparing for future debates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Sample Times for a Thirty-Minute Classroom Debate with Six Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructive Speeches and Cross Examinations</th>
<th>Debate format for panels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro/Affirmative Speaker #1: 2 minutes</td>
<td>Constructive Speeches and Cross Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con/Negative Speaker #1: 2 minutes</td>
<td>Pro/Affirmative Side: 4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Examination of Speaker: 1 minute</td>
<td>Cross Examination of Side: 2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro/Affirmative Speaker #2: 2 minutes</td>
<td>Con/Negative Side: 4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con/Negative Speaker #2: 2 minutes</td>
<td>Cross Examination of Side: 2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Examination of Speaker: 1 minute</td>
<td>Rebuttal Speeches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro/Affirmative Speaker #3: 2 minutes</td>
<td>Con/Negative Side: 3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Examination of Speaker: 1 minute</td>
<td>Pro/Affirmative Side: 3 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rebuttal Speeches
Con/Negative Speaker #3: 2 minutes
Pro/Affirmative Speaker #3: 2 minutes

Preparation Time for Each Side to Use at Will
2 minutes each team

Audience Q & A
8 minutes

*This format has the Pro/Affirmative team speaking first and last, as in contemporary trials.

Table 4. Constructive Criticism Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team 1: Carly, Min, and Lukasz</th>
<th>Rank 1 to 5 (5 = excellent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of federalist and anti-federalist positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to advance specific historical speakers’ ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency in refuting opponents’ arguments based upon historical speakers’ views</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity in presentation of historical figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of effective argumentation techniques (i.e., Toulmin model)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker #1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker #2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker #3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

Engaging every member of the class in the debates is important and can be fostered in several ways. First, students should be encouraged to take careful notes during each debate. If desired, the instructor can ask for a follow-up report of the debate as a homework assignment. Second, audience members can participate in question-and-answer sessions that occur either during or directly following the debate. Finally, audience members can fill out constructive criticism sheets for the debate participants based on the instructors’ rubric for the event (see Table 4).

CONCLUSION

Re-envisioning the introductory civics course via a debate-centered curriculum opens up tremendous opportunities for developing students’ repertoires of analytical and oratorical skills. Additionally, at a time in which universities and public affairs programs are being charged with the task of providing civic education to the next generation of college students, debate activities provide a rich context from which to develop meaningful kinesthetic exercises for future voters and political activists. Through debate, students can grasp the complexity inherent in modern-day policymaking. They can hone the research and group-consensus-building skills that will prove indispensable once they have graduated from college. The key to implementing debate-centered pedagogy effectively is simply to engender a climate of open discussion with minimal structure so that debates are easily understood and seem fair. Aside from those conditions, nearly any debate activity employed will be successful. Though some sample debate topics are provided in the appendix that follows, nearly any current issue can provide the fodder for a rich and fascinating debate. Finally, it is not necessary for an instructor to possess any prior debate training or experience to be an effective facilitator of classroom debates. As long as there are two sides engaged in a heated discussion, moderated by a respected advisor, a successful debate will be had.

NOTES
1. Although Parker’s arguments were originally directed as a rebuttal to Martin Rochester’s critique of civics education in K-12 education, I believe that his description of the academic environment is equally well-suited to the modern college campus.
2. The NYUDL is a competitive policy debate program for high school students. For more information, see www.impactcoalition.org.

REFERENCES
Arguing Toward a More Active Citizenry: Re-envisioning the Introductory Civics Course


Appendix A: Sample Debate Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Should Iraq employ a presidential or parliamentary system?</td>
<td>Introduces students to the basics of various systems of government. Increases awareness of Iraq issues. Encourages students to appreciate the pros and cons of the U.S. system of government versus other systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The New York Police Department should not be allowed to conduct random searches of passengers.</td>
<td>Introduces students to Constitutional issues. Asks students to focus on municipal policymaking. Engages students in the current debate over civil liberties versus national security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fictitious case study: The Supreme Court should uphold the constitutionality of Maine’s “Hate Speech and Incitement to Violence Act”?</td>
<td>Introduces students to checks and balances. Encourages a review of key First Amendment cases. Invites students to evaluate the value of free speech rights vs. hate codes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case study
The state of Maine has witnessed a rash of homophobic incidents in high schools, including several violent attacks on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students. This, along with a desire to avoid another tragedy like the Matthew Shepard murder, prompted the legislature to adopt the “Hate Speech and Incitement to Violence Act.” One of the Act’s provisions makes it a criminal offense to publish any “openly homophobic materials which might induce violence toward a person identified as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or transgender.”

A test case has now emerged and the Supreme Court has granted it certiorari. The facts of the case are as follows: On September 13th, Maribel Jones, a student at Valleyview High School, attempted to publish an article in her high school’s newspaper denouncing the “special treatment” that GLBT students purportedly receive at the school. (GLBT students have several designated “safe rooms,” an after-school club that is funded by the school, and a bulletin board). Before the article could go to print, the principal told Maribel that it could not be included in the school’s newspaper because it violated the “Hate Speech and Incitement to Violence Act.” Maribel sued the school and the State of Maine charging that both the school’s actions and the Act were a violation of her First Amendment rights.
People in Public Affairs

American University

Seven AU public affairs graduate students were named finalists in this year’s Presidential Management Fellows program. Lisa Davis, James Hedrick, Sarah Jones, Jana Locke, Elizabeth Nagorski, Nicholas Phend, and Rachael Schacherer were named as finalists in the program, which was established in 1977 to attract to the federal service outstanding individuals from a wide variety of academic disciplines who have an interest in and commitment to a career in the analysis and management of public policies and programs.

Based on a AU School of Public Affairs conference on Dwight Waldo’s legacy, public administration and policy professors David H. Rosenbloom and Howard E. McCurdy have collected the wisdom of their distinguished peers in Revisiting Waldo’s Administrative State: Constancy and Change in Public Administration (Georgetown University Press, June 2006). The book explores public administration’s big ideas and issues and questions the success of contemporary efforts to reinvent government. Taking Waldo’s ideas as a starting point, Rosenbloom and McCurdy revisit and update his key concepts and consider their applicability for today.

In her latest book, Challenging the Performance Movement: Accountability, Complexity, and Democratic Values (Georgetown University Press, 2006), Scholar in Residence Beryl Radin examines the unintended results of the government’s move to measure performance across agencies. Radin’s previous books have included Beyond Machiavelli: Policy Analysis Comes of Age (Georgetown University Press, 2000) and The Accountable Juggler: The Art of Leadership in a Federal Agency (CQ Press, 2002).

Scholar-in-residence Robert J. Marshak’s Covert Processes at Work: Managing the Five Hidden Dimensions of Organizational Change (Berrett-Koehler, 2006) was released in July.

Public Program Evaluation: A Statistical Guide (M.E. Sharpe, 2006) by Laura Langbein will be published in September. This text is designed to equip students and practitioners with the statistical skills needed to meet government standards for public program evaluation.

Professors Daniel L. Dreisbach and Alan M. Levine have been named fellows in Princeton University’s Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions,
promotes teaching and scholarship in constitutional law and political thought. Levine, an associate professor of political theory, will be a visiting fellow in the department of politics. Dreisbach, a professor of government in the School of Public Affairs’ Department of Government, will be a William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and Public Life. The fellowships are for the academic year 2006-07.

Katherine Farquhar has been named director of AU/NTL, a collaborative program of the School of Public Affairs and the National Training Laboratory Institute. Robert J. Marshak has been appointed scholar-in-residence with the program, which educates and trains organization development and change practitioners and organizational leaders. The School of Public Affairs offers the M.S. in Organization Development (MSOD) degree through the AU/NTL program.

James A. Thurber, Distinguished Professor and director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies, recently testified on lobbying reform before the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and spoke on NPR’s Fresh Air with Terry Gross to discuss the same subject. Thurber also testified on accountability through transparency before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Rules and on the Federal Election Campaign Act before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

Karen O’Connor, Government Professor and director of the School of Public Affairs’ Women and Politics Institute, participated in a panel discussion, “Towards a Global Network for Research on Women and Politics” at the United Nation’s 50th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. O’Connor addressed the significance for society of empowering college women. O’Connor also recently testified on Roe. v. Wade before the Subcommittee on the Constitution House Judiciary Committee.

Dean William M. LeoGrande gave the Martin Diskin/Oxfam Memorial Lecture at the March conference of the Latin American Studies Association, the principal international scholarly organization dedicated to the study of Latin America. In addition, LeoGrande’s recent op-ed in the Miami Herald addressed the U.S. ban on travel to Cuba and the exception granted to the Cuban national team to play in the World Baseball Classic.

Arizona State University

Debra Friedman has joined ASU as a professor and dean of the College of Public Programs. Friedman served as associate provost for academic planning and managed university-wide innovation programs, enrollment planning, and strategic visioning initiatives at the University of Washington before coming to ASU.

Professor of Practice Rick Shangraw is the executive director of ASU’s Decision Theater. Shangraw previously held a tenure-track appointment at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

Three other new faculty members have joined the College: Professor James Svara, previously chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration.
at North Carolina State University; Professor of Practice Martin Vanacour, former city manager of Glendale, Arizona; and Assistant Professor Khalid Al-Yahya, formerly of Harvard University and the University of Connecticut.

Recent ASU publications of note include The Dance of Leadership by Robert Denhardt and Janet Denhardt; Public Personnel Administration by N. Joseph Cayer, and Zhiyon Lan’s “Fast Growing Public Administration Education in the People’s Republic of China,” an article published in the PA Times International Supplement.

Auburn University at Montgomery

Linda F. Dennard has joined Auburn University at Montgomery as an associate professor of political science and public administration. For the past four years, Dennard had been on the faculty at the University College Cork in Cork, Ireland, and served previously at California State University Hayward.

Kalu N. Kalu has joined the faculty at Auburn University at Montgomery as an associate professor of political science and public administration. He previously served on the faculty of Emporia State University as an assistant professor and director of its public affairs program.

Baruch College

A state-of-the-art facility providing secure access to Census Bureau micro data for approved research opened at the Baruch College School of Public Affairs in May. One of only eight such facilities nationwide, the New York Census Research Data Center (NYCRDC) was officially opened by Baruch College President Kathleen Waldron and U.S. Bureau of the Census Director Charles Louis Kincannon. RDCs provide access to uniquely detailed information on employment, poverty, housing, trade, manufacturing, and other U.S. economic conditions.

Baruch College School of Public Affairs Professor Sanders Korenman, a Research Associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research, is Executive Director of the NYCRDC. Rosemary Hyson, an economist, is the administrator for NYCRDC Baruch. The NYCRDC plans to hold periodic presentations of its ongoing research. In addition, this September, NYCRDC Baruch will bring together researchers working at RDCs around the country at the 2006 Census RDC Annual Conference. The conference is open to the research community.

At the RDCs, researchers whose proposals have met the Census Bureau’s rigorous standards can access economic (business) and demographic data gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition to its decennial demographic census, the Census Bureau conducts censuses and surveys of businesses and surveys of households and individuals. All research conducted in the RDCs must meet the criteria of benefits to the Census Bureau, scientific merit, need for nonpublic data, feasibility, and disclosure risk avoidance.
Professor of Public Affairs E.S. (Steve) Savas, of Baruch’s School of Public Affairs, has been named one of the “Great Contributors to Public Administration” by Public Administration in the New Century. The text, authored by Jeffrey D. Greene, highlights the work of 12 20th-century contributors within the field, beginning with Woodrow Wilson.

Savas, known for his work advocating privatization of public sector functions, has also been cited in this year’s edition of Grover Starling’s work, Managing the Public Sector, which chronologically covers a range of notable figures beginning with James Madison, and lists Savas’ work as one of 41 “Highlights in the Intellectual History of American Public Administration.” Savas also was recently recognized by Baruch College President Kathleen Waldron at the college’s Commencement Ceremony with the Presidential Excellence Award for Distinguished Scholarship.

California State University Dominguez Hills

Under the leadership of Iris Baxter, Pi Alpha Alpha faculty advisor, the California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) chapter of Pi Alpha Alpha has initiated a new award, The Todd Argow Memorial Award for Outstanding Public Servants. Argow, who died earlier this year, was a past city manager, an ASPA President at the national and local levels, and a staunch supporter of the CSUDH MPA program and its students. Patrick West was presented with the inaugural Argow award in April.

In addition, Baxter, an assistant professor, recently was named chairperson for the department of Public Administration and Public Policy at CSUDH.

Cleveland State University

Cleveland State University’s Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs announces the appointment of Jeffrey L. Brudney as the new Albert A. Levin Chair of Urban Studies and Public Service. Brudney, a recognized scholar in the area of public administration, nonprofit sector studies, and volunteerism, will begin the appointment in January 2007.

The Levin Chair, established in 1969, was the first endowed professorship in America combining classroom teaching with direct public service to address the problems of the urban environment.

Clinton School of Public Service

Skip Rutherford, chairman of the board of the William J. Clinton Foundation, was named dean of the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service. Rutherford, executive vice president of a Little Rock public relations firm, replaces former U.S. Senator David Pryor, who had served as dean since the school opened in June 2004. Rutherford will step down as chairman of the Clinton
Foundation but will remain on its board. As chairman, Rutherford spearheaded a fund drive that raised $165 million to build Clinton’s presidential library.

Cornell University

Norman Uphoff, a professor of government and director of the Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture, and Development (CIIFAD), recently joined the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs as a core faculty member.

CIPA Director David Lewis recently announced the creation of a new service-learning initiative, along with the appointment of MPA alumnus Jon Gans as the program’s coordinator. Gans said the initiative’s purpose is to provide professional-quality services to public entities such as government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, foundations, and other community groups, while helping MPA candidates gain practical experience. The service learning experience will include a preparatory seminar course on program planning and evaluation practice methods, followed by directed fieldwork addressing a real problem, issue, or opportunity for a client using a consultative approach.

George Mason University

NASA recently presented Arnauld Nicogossian, Distinguished Research Professor at George Mason University’s School of Public Policy, its Exceptional Service Medal. Nicogossian, one of the team members of the NASA-Russian Space Agency Advisory Committee, was given the award for his contributions to the research of operational safety for human exploration missions and for promoting U.S.-Russian cooperation in space research and operation.

Bill Stuebner, affiliate professor in the Peace Operations Policy Program, has been working for the past eight months to help establish a truth commission for Bosnia and Herzegovina. With his colleague Neil Kritz, director of the Rule of Law Program at the United States Institute of Peace, Stuebner has succeeded in winning sponsorship for the project from the three speakers of the Bosnian House of Representatives and the eight major political parties in the Parliament.

Mississippi State University

Robert J. Buchanan has joined the core public administration faculty of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Mississippi State University. Buchanan is a nationally recognized authority on health policy.

North Carolina State University

Richard C. Kearney has been named as the first director of the School of Public and International Affairs at North Carolina State University, Raleigh. Kearney was formerly professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at East Carolina University (1998-2006); professor and director of the MPA program and the Institute of Public and Urban Affairs at the University of Connecticut (1990-
Kearney also served in visiting capacities at the Catholic University in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, the University of Northern Iowa, and at universities in Mexico City, Mexico, and Caracas, Venezuela. He was a Senior Fulbright Lecturer at the University of Mauritius.

Economist Ryan Bosworth will join the faculty as an assistant professor. Bosworth has wide-ranging interests in policy, including environmental, health, and educational policy.

Branda Nowell, a community psychologist, will join the faculty as an assistant professor in January. Branda’s interests include community collaboration, social capital, and sustainable development.

Katherine Getzen Willoughby was recognized as public administration program’s 2006 Outstanding Alumnus. Willoughby is a professor in the Andrew Young School of Public Policy at Georgia State. The faculty selected her in recognition of her scholarship, her commitment to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of state and local governments, and her contributions as a teacher to Georgia State students and to NC State doctoral students and alumni.

Nesbary Leaving Oakland University

Dale Nesbary has become Oakland University’s vice president of academic affairs. Nesbary was formerly associate professor of political science and director of the master of public administration program at Oakland.

Old Dominion University

William M. Leavitt has stepped down after six years as department chair of the Urban Studies & Public Administration (USPA) program at Old Dominion University. Berhanu Mengistu, the new chair, was formerly the director of the doctoral program in Public Administration and Urban Policy.

John C. Morris has become the new director of that Ph.D program. In addition, Roger Richman recently became the new director of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program.

Walden

Walden University, an accredited online institution, has announced the creation of a new School of Public Policy and Administration and has made changes to its online offerings.

The stand-alone School of Public Policy and Administration was created at the end of 2005, and Marion Angelica, the department’s former chair, was tapped as the school’s new dean.

Walden, with the first fully online public administration school in the nation, has created a public administration curriculum that addresses a need to develop a larger pool of professionals with enhanced critical thinking, problem-solving
skills, and cultural competence. The school also has created a scholarship program available to current federal, state, and local government employees.

University of West Georgia
Sooho Lee has joined the master of public administration program at the University of West Georgia. Lee has expertise in policy analysis and budget management and is currently working with Barry Bozeman of Georgia Tech on a state-funded project.

News, Programs, and Opportunities

New School of Public and International Affairs at NC State
A new School of Public and International Affairs at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, housed in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, contains separate departments of public administration and political science, a master's in international studies, and the Police Leadership Forum. The School's mission is to improve government and nonprofit organizations and to address and promote understanding of public policy issues at all levels of government and the nonprofit sectors. The School will partner with other university and state entities in these efforts, including the Institute for Emerging Issues and the Institute for Nonprofits.

Ohio State Creates John Glenn School of Public Affairs
A new school within The Ohio State University will help integrate the university's public policy research, teaching, and service programs. The John Glenn School of Public Affairs will merge the existing School of Public Policy and Management with the John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy.

Tufts Renames College
Tufts University recently announced a $40 million endowment from alumnus Jonathan Tisch. The University College of Citizenship and Public Service has been renamed the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service.

Old Dominion University
The Ph.D program at Old Dominion has been reconstructed and renamed. The former doctoral degree, Urban Services—Management, part of a three-pronged program, has become a stand-alone program in Public Administration and Urban Policy. The MPA curriculum has also undergone changes, reducing the core courses to seven and offering students more opportunity to choose more courses in their career interest area.

The Advanced Certificate Program for students holding master’s degrees now
has five areas of concentration: Conflict Resolution and Negotiation; Human Resource Management; Public Policy; Public Budgeting and Finance; and General Public Sector Management.

**Marvin Andrews Graduate Program in Urban Management**

The School of Public Affairs at Arizona State University, in cooperation with the Arizona City/County Management Association, is pleased to announce the opening of the Marvin Andrews Graduate Program in Urban Management. The program, which will lead to the Master of Public Administration degree, will admit up to six students each year, based on a search process designed to identify the country’s most talented students aspiring to executive levels in local government. The Andrews Fellows will serve half-time internships in various city governments in the Phoenix metropolitan area while taking courses at Arizona State. Each of the students will also be assigned a top local government official in the state as a personal mentor during the program and beyond. As part of their coursework, and in addition to their internships, the Andrews Fellows will also engage in course-related, real-world projects in urban management and urban policy in cooperation with other local governments in Arizona and the Southwest.

**In Memoriam**

**Julius Babbitt**, 36, who served as the director of the Kennedy School of Government Alumni Programs, passed away in April. He was 36 years old and had graduated from the Kennedy School Midcareer program in 2001.

Babbitt joined the Kennedy School in January 2005 after serving in the administrations of four Republican governors of Massachusetts and as an assistant secretary and adviser to five Massachusetts cabinet secretaries. Throughout his more than 15 years in public service, he worked with numerous agency directors, commissioners, and elected officials.

Since graduating from the Kennedy School, Babbitt had been extremely active in alumni affairs for the Kennedy School and Harvard University. He was Chair of the Kennedy School of Government New England Alumni Association and a member of the Kennedy School’s Alumni Executive Council. In the latter role, he was instrumental in launching pilot programs for the Alumni Mentorship Program and Career Development Initiative for current Kennedy School students.

**Dean Emeritus Earl H. DeLong**, 97, who served as Dean Emeritus at American University from 1963 until his retirement in 1972, died in March. DeLong led the then-named School of Government and Public Administration during the years in which it grew into one of the leading programs of its kind in the nation.
Under his leadership, the school moved from its original location in Foggy Bottom into the Ward Circle Building on AU’s main campus.

DeLong received a doctorate in political science from Northwestern University in 1933 where he began his career as a member of the political science faculty. He joined the U.S. Civil Service Commission in 1941 and served the Smaller War Plants Corp before joining the Marine Corps. After World War II, he worked for the Veterans Administration, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency’s Office of Clandestine Services and Special Operations Research Office.

On March 14, long-time NASPAA site visitor Ray Joseph, formerly of the New York City Department of Education, passed away after an illness. Joseph was an active participant in NASPAA activities, attending numerous site visits across the Eastern half of the country from Louisiana and Illinois to Virginia and New York. He was also heavily involved in ASPA activities, serving as a former member of the National Council. Ray was one of NASPAA’s most beloved site visitors and his death marks a genuine loss to the public administration community. Condolences may be sent to his family: Mrs. Nicole Joseph and family, 145-12 232nd Street, Rosedale, NY 11413.

Earl Littrell, Professor Emeritus of Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, and an Atkinson Graduate School Advisory Board Member, passed away April 24, 2006.

Interviews & Essays

Providence Service Corporation CEO Fletcher McCusker, MPA

with Scott R. Talan, NASPAA Director of Communications

Note: Fletcher McCusker has a unique story to share in how he created, managed, and recruited for Providence Service Corporation. McCusker was invited to speak before NASPAA’s Executive Council at a retreat in Tucson this spring. He shared his thoughts on MPA qualifications and on working in his field of contracting for human services in local, state, and federal governments. The University of Arizona Eller College of Business Administration, a NASPAA member school, hosted the meeting.

Providence Service Corporation was formed in January 1997 in response to the increasing governmental initiatives to privatize human services. Providence was quickly labeled the “Human Services Company Without Walls” because the company does not own or operate any type of institution. Providence specializes in providing direct services and case management to children, adolescents, and young adults with behavioral health needs as
A number of states, counties, cities, and federal programs have turned to the private sector for help in managing the ever-increasing number of clients benefiting from government subsidized programs. Privatized human services include child welfare systems, welfare to work programs, Medicaid client supervision, in-home counseling, probation and parole, substance abuse treatment, juvenile justice, child protective services, and alternative education.

ST: You are an MPA...but you won't hire any. Why is that?
FM: I was a government employee during and after undergrad at U of A [University of Arizona]. I enrolled in ASU’s (Arizona State University) College of Public Programs thinking it would give be a good government base, also a master’s-level employee has a higher base salary so I was encouraged to get an advanced degree. I never figured what I am doing would become an industry. I never went back into government.

As an MPA I was ill-prepared to be a CEO of a public company. I always figured I would be a good civil servant and retire on my government pension. I knew nothing about how to write a business plan, how to attract and manage venture capital, corporate governance, mergers, etc.

Today’s MPA student is no better prepared than I was. This is unfortunate in that we believe the values and business ethics of these graduates would be most in-tune with ours but we find they are not-for-profit or government-focused and lack entrepreneurial skills and instincts.

ST: How can MPAs better prepare themselves for working at Providence or similar contractors?
FM: Take coursework from finance, business, develop business planning skills; know public company relevant issues. More crossover between the B school and the P school. A more diverse internship would be valuable to them [students, job seekers] and us as a potential employer.

ST: You have 10 applicants for every job opening and only 16 percent turnover with employees. What is your secret?
FM: We give our employees a great deal of autonomy and authority, from budgeting their program to marketing their program. We are a “best practice” model business, which means that social workers interested in making a real difference gravitate to our home/field based model rather than sitting around in a clinic somewhere. We have been very generous with our stock, creating some $45,000,000 of real value for our employees.

ST: Do you consider yourself more of a private or public services provider?
FM: We are exclusively a government contractor, we have no private business, no insurance paid business, so we are truly a public services provider under subcontracts with government units.

ST: In Washington and certain academic circles the phrase “multi-sectoral” is bandied about a lot lately. What is your view of what this means?
FM: Multi-sectoral to us means that the modern delivery system of government sponsored programs will be part government, part academic, part not-for-profit, part for-profit, and involve public companies, private companies, not-for-profit agencies, and individual providers. More and more government units are diversifying their services and involving private contractors. Many services historically only the domain of government units are being privatized: from parole, to probation, to child welfare, to case management, foster care, and on and on. We manage the government’s mission and execute the government’s plan with appropriated government dollars.

Your curricula are silent about this evolution!

Award Winning Career Institute Orients Undergraduates Toward Public Service

Robert Polner, Affairs Director, NYU Wagner School of Public Service

When undergraduates who harbor an interest in, say, social justice seek out advice from a career planning office on their campus, they are sometimes urged to apply to law school in a public interest type of program. Other students who possess at least a general inclination toward a public service career may gravitate to business. That field, like the law profession, tends to be better promoted and more clearly defined than public service.

“There’s an imbalance,” said Nancy Paul, career development director at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Paul added that many college campuses could do more to help young people translate their interest in making a difference on behalf of others into a deeper understanding of public service options and opportunities.

Paul and other career planning advisers say they are making strides in redressing the imbalance with the help of an innovative training conference for college and university career service professionals run by the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University and Idealist.org, called the Institute on Public Service Careers. The first two-day conference was held in late 2004 by the NYU Wagner/Idealist.org collaboration, and five regional Institute conferences have been convened or are in the works through 2006 to provide training on public service careers to 150 career services professionals from 125 campuses nationwide.

David Schachter, assistant dean of career services and experiential learning at NYU Wagner and co-creator of the conference, feels that the Institute on Public Service Careers represents an ambitious response to a significant challenge. He comments, “There are many young adults who are interested in doing good work, and very few resources to help them funnel that into the world of public

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service.” Schacter also mentioned that the advice and resources given to career services professionals through this conference are helping to shape and sharpen campus programs and other services for undergraduate students interested in public service.

Training and resources already provided by the Institute on Public Service Careers have stimulated an array of new programming on public service career opportunities, tailored by each participant to his or her campus. Among the enhancements are improved access to government and nonprofit employers and an enriched stream of career service activities, literature, and one-on-one counseling.

Paul, of SUNY Binghamton, said, “It’s not an issue of convincing students to go corporate or not. Rather, it’s a matter of providing them with a more balanced view of their career options overall. That’s what is most important.”

The phrase “public service” is no longer synonymous with “government employment.” Increasingly, issues of public importance are being tackled by nonprofit and private sector organizations. In addition, private individuals, unaffiliated with a government, nonprofit, or private organizations, often take the initiative to launch new efforts to address public concerns. The evolving field is large and growing, as is demand for skilled and motivated employees.

Paul describes her involvement with the Institute as beneficial, noting, “It reinforced something we had in motion: infusing more public service programming and events into what we offer. It also was really good to get further insights and ideas from colleagues from other campuses.”

Nancy Laidlaw, assistant director of career services at Rice University in Houston, TX., said that her participation in an Institute on Public Service Careers conference helped generate a flurry of public service-related activities on her campus in 2005-06, including career fairs, a speaker series, and a program to send a competitively selected student contingent to Idealist.org’s annual convention. “Rice has had significant change in the programs and offerings and, hopefully, in the attitudes students have about public service,” she said.

Though aimed directly at career advisers, the ultimate beneficiaries of the Institute’s conferences are the students. Lemeekeque T. Woods, who graduated from SUNY Binghamton in 2004 and received a master’s degree in social sciences there in 2005, showed a strong inclination toward a career in public service. Paul’s office and others at Binghamton were quick to help her apply for a related NYU Wagner initiative, CareerWays, a ten-month fellowship that helps recent college graduates explore opportunities in public service. Woods was approved for the fellowship that ends in June 2006. Though she had once considered becoming a doctor, Woods, who is senior coordinator of mentoring services in New York City with Catholic Big Sisters Big Brothers, is now honing a longer-term goal of starting a nonprofit social service organization to assist children and adolescents. She has been accepted to Columbia’s School of Social Work, which she will begin attending in the fall of 2006.
“In college, I always knew I wanted to help others. This was what I was good at, and had a passion for. But I needed advice and encouragement,” says Woods. “I really have been able to develop a clear sense of what I want to do with my career, and what types of skills, experiences and academic credentials are needed to fulfill it.”

The Institute on Public Service Careers had a key impetus in 2002. That year, in a survey of graduating college seniors conducted by NYU Wagner Professor Paul Light and the Brookings Institution, 62 percent seriously considered public service careers but only 44 percent said they knew a “great deal” or a “fair amount” about finding a job in government or a nonprofit. Less than 25 percent of students surveyed felt their career services office was “very helpful” in connecting them to public service opportunities.

NYU Wagner partnered with Idealist.org, and the first Institute conference was held in December 2004 for 33 participants from colleges across the country, all of whom strongly recommended additional events in a post conference survey. NYU Wagner and Idealist.org then received funding to conduct regional trainings: Portland, OR; Atlanta, GA; New York, NY; Minneapolis, MN; and the Southwest. Next year, the Institute is hoping to reconvene everyone who attended the Institute to consider their post-training endeavors and challenges.

The Institute is also discussing creation of a parallel training program for staff members in Year-of-Service programs such as the Peace Corps, City Year, and Teach for America, in hopes of helping these professionals guide and channel participants’ change-the-world ideas, experiences, and energies into a rewarding and productive life, and career, in public service. Ultimately, the Institute is helping stimulate rewarding careers devoted to public service, whether in government, nonprofits, or the private sector, by assisting college career service offices in different parts of the country so that they can enhance their ability to help students who are looking to make the world a better place.

About NASPAA

NASPAA is an association of more than 253 schools of public affairs and administration in the United States and assorted associate members in the United States and abroad. We are committed to promoting quality in public affairs education and to promoting the ideal of public service. NASPAA serves as the specialized accrediting body for academic programs in public administration, public policy, and public affairs. This accreditation practice now includes a roster of 155 accredited programs.

Featured activities on NASPAA’s agenda include an active campaign for public service and public service education, which includes initiatives addressing media relations and the tracking of public policy issues relevant to NASPAA’s mis-
sion. We are sponsoring research and action on the status of minorities in public affairs education. NASPAA works closely with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) on education and training for local government management. In recognition of the broadening dimensions of our field, we have developed a set of guidelines for nonprofit education in collaboration with the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council. We are also working on outreach in other areas central to NASPAA programs, such as health management education. In addition, we are engaged internationally, particularly in the development of the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee) and the new Inter-American Network for Public Administration Education (INPAE).

NASPAA’s Annual Conference on public affairs and public affairs education is focused on research and dialogue on academic program administration, on curriculum and teaching, and on the synthesis of research on topics of current importance and the relationship of this research to teaching and practice. The conference is an active mix of program administrators, faculty, students, and practitioners in our field.

NASPAA on the Internet

Web site: www.naspaa.org Listserv: To subscribe to the NASPAA listserv, email your request to majordomo@s-cwis.unomaha.edu. The subject line should remain blank. In the body of the message, type only the following line: subscribe naspaa your complete name. To submit items to the listserv, address them to naspaa@fac pacs.unomaha.edu.

NASPAA also has specialized listservs for career directors and doctoral program directors. Please see www.naspaa.org/principals/news/listserv.asp for details on how to join these lists.
### NASPAA Staff Directory

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Inquiries about specific program areas may be sent to the following email addresses or to NASPAA at 1120 G Street NW, Suite 730, Washington, DC 20005. Phone: 202-628-8965. Fax: 202-626-4978.

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