



CEU Summer University

Nádor u. 9, Budapest, Hungary 1051

Tel.: (36 1) 327 3069, 327 3811

Fax: (36 1) 327 3124

E-mail: summeru@ceu.hu

Website: <http://www.ceu.hu/sun/sunindx.html>

Education Policy: Concepts and Theory

July 1-12, 2002

Course Director: **Thomas Timár**, University of California, Riverside, USA

Resource Persons: **W. Norton Grubb**, School of Education, University of California, USA
Gábor Halász, Director, National Institute of Education, Budapest, Hungary
Péter Radó, Assistant Director, Institute for Educational Policy, OSI, Budapest, Hungary
Jerzy Wiszniewski, Consultant for educational policy and planning, Warsaw, Poland
Pavel Zgaga, Professor, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Short biographies

Thomas Balázs Timár

Academic teaching experience includes University of California Riverside and Berkeley, Stanford University, and Harvard. Course director of the education policy course for the Summer University at Central European University in Budapest 1998-2000, 2002. Consultant for the Open Society Institute, Institute for Education Policy, the United Nations Development Program, and foundation in various CEE countries on education reform. Presently, lead consultant for the United Nations Development Program, Open Society Institute, the European Union, and World Bank on a three-year project to assist the Ukrainian government in a major education reform effort—pre-school through university. Other experience includes several years as an education consultant for the California State Legislature.

Pavel Zgaga

Pavel Zgaga is presently professor of education philosophy, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; former Minister of Education and Sport, Republic of Slovenia; education representative to UNESCO and OECD from Slovenia.

Jerzy Wisniewski

Director General of the Ministry of Education in 1998 when the education reforms were undertaken. Previously head of the International Department of the Ministry of Education, Poland. Polish delegate to the Council of Europe and OECD.

Péter Radó

Associate Director, Institute for Educational Policy (Open Society Institute) in Budapest, Hungary. Rado was also the head of minority and ethnic affairs in the Hungarian Ministry of Education and teaches in the sociology department at the University of Budapest (Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem). He has extensive knowledge of education reform issues in CEE/CIS and has recently published a book on the topic.

Course objectives

The collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) between 1989 and 1993 initiated a major institutional transformation in those countries. At the most basic level, the period signaled a shift from centrally planned and rigidly state controlled education systems to democratic, decentralized systems. At a deeper level, transition meant different things in different countries. For most, it meant the reinvention not only

of government but also of civil society. For some, reinvention meant borrowing the best from other nations and adapting it to their own needs and preferences. For others, it meant a return to pre-communist systems of government, in an effort to expunge the last 40, and in some cases 80 years from the nation's collective memory.

The reconstruction of education systems in CEE/CIS countries is a major concern for policy makers. Reasons vary, but they generally cohere around the need to modernize and align national education systems with those in Western nations and specifically EU.

In spite of the urgent need for reform, with the exception of a handful of countries, there are no organizations within national education system which can provide significant — if not extensive — capacity to support educational development. While there is also a need for maturation of governmental processes in these countries that allows them to understand the importance of national educational policy making and, therefore, to seek to develop the capacity — at least in embryonic form — in systematic and effective ways. Currently, there is little understanding or appreciation in the regions for the art and craft of policy making. Traditional models of centralized planning — the dominant mode of policy decision making during the socialist period — are generally discredited, lacking credibility, and, most importantly, are models of decision making that are disconnected from the principles that animate democratic decision making. The slippery problem is to find a balanced policy making process that embraces and seeks to balance various elements that comprise policy decision making. Under the previous system, expertise in the form of central planning dominated decision making. Since the transition, the pendulum has predominantly swung toward politics. Policy analysis both conceptually and practically is virtually unknown. Thus, the challenge is, on the one hand, to develop among various constituencies within the regions an understanding and appreciation for policy analysis to inform political decision making, and, on the other hand, to develop policy analytic capacity within the regions.

The course has several objectives. One is to introduce participants to concepts and methods of policy analysis. Specifically, the course is intended to

- help students understand the role of public policy within the context of democratic, pluralistic systems;
- help students develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between education issues and problems, policy development, and the institutional structures needed to support those policies;
- develop skills in analyzing policy arguments in order to construct persuasive policy analyses;
- sharpen participants' understanding and knowledge, and use of policy analysis;
- to familiarize students with the roles of various NGOs and international organizations in shaping education policy.

Course level

The course is aimed at graduate students, education ministry and NGO staff, junior faculty who work in the area of education policy. Individuals interested in policy research, development, or evaluation are encouraged to apply.

Course format

The course offers a combination of lectures and seminars, including student presentations, some prepared in advance. Students will develop group policy analytic projects over the course of the two-week program. Participants are expected to take an active part in the discussions.

Course content

The program's content is organized around four broad areas:

- educational purpose (understanding how purpose relates to educational policy making);
- the politics of reform (understanding the political processes shape educational systems);
- educational processes (understanding organizational behavior, classroom processes, and how policy and practice connect);
- policy effects (evaluating and measuring the impact of policies).

The four areas can also be stated as fairly simple questions that form the basis of policy analysis: What is the problem? What are the various criteria of choice? How should they be applied? How can implementation be attended to in policy design? How can estimates of political feasibility be used to guide rather than stultify action?

The course is organized around case studies that have been developed for several countries. Students will be given real problems to work with and to solve over the two-week life of the course. These case studies could focus on the following policy areas:

- *Rationale for education*: what are the fundamental underlying social, cultural, political, and economic principles of the educational system?
- *Finance of education*: what is the basis and rationale for financing education; how are funding priorities determined?
- *Participation* rates by types of schools: technical and trade school, gymnasium.
- *Curriculum*: what is taught and at what level and by whom are curriculum decisions made.
- *Assessment and accountability*: what is the basis for assessment of students and how are schools held accountable?
- *Administration*: what is the background of administrators, how are they trained and selected?
- *Teaching profession*: teacher training, compensation, professionalization, authority and control of the profession.
- *Governance*: where is control over education vested, decentralization vs. centralization, concentration vs. dispersion of authority.

A combination of discipline based approaches and problem-centered case studies will allow students to cut into policy problems in different ways. To be creative and effective problem solvers, however, students need to draw upon a variety of disciplinary areas. These include the following:

- organizational behavior: develop an understanding of the applicability of organizational theory to educational policy; link goals and policies to teaching and learning in classrooms and the organizational environments that shape them;
- data analysis and measurement: understand and develop the kind of data that are needed to inform policy making; develop data analysis skills; handle quantifiable information;
- politics of education: develop an understanding of the relationship between political structures and processes and policy making;
- sociology of education: understand concepts of education and social reproduction, social mobility, and educational policy interventions;
- philosophy: develop an understanding of the moral and ethical considerations in policy making; different meanings of concepts of equity, liberty, community;
- economics of education: develop and understanding of the economic principles that support theories of public education; understand concepts of cost and benefit; relate educational policies to national economy;
- evaluation: develop skills to conduct program and policy evaluation.

While this is admittedly a great deal of territory to cover in just two weeks, the purpose of the course is to give students some understanding of how these disciplinary areas are related to policy development in education.

For more detailed biographies, updated course description, syllabus, reading lists please check <http://www.ceu.hu/sun/sunindx.html>

Non-discrimination policy statement

Central European University does not discriminate on the basis of – including, but not limited to – race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, gender or sexual orientation in administering its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.