

GPH 702 Final Project

Final Policy Analysis

Due in Week 7

Final Project Summary

The final Policy Analysis assignment, due at the end of Week 7, will be a culmination of all that you have learned and explored in previous weeks. The final paper is not, however, a wholesale copying and pasting of previous assignments. As you work through the steps of policy analysis, as laid out in the Bardach text, you will learn how to refine your articulation of the policy problem, explore new ways of expressing and representing the data and evidence base for your policy problem. Bardach states on page 1 that the analytic process is one that is “much given to reconsidering, reviewing, changing your mind -- in other words, retracing your steps on the path before starting out once more.” With updated information from your fellow students and your instructor, from the literature, from an investigation of the values and attitudes of your likely audience(s), you will want to update your approach and the information you include to support it.

While you do want to be persuasive, the policy analysis paper is not advocacy writing and should be written from an informed, evidence-based perspective that avoids opinion, hyperbole or rhetoric. Your policy analysis paper will inform, but is separate from, your oral testimony before policymakers (due Week 8). Oral testimony is advocacy and can incorporate a greater range of persuasive elements (e.g. emotion, anecdote, props, etc.). You will draw from your work in Weeks 1-7, but you must present a seamless document that incorporates transitions between and among the “steps” you have taken in developing your analysis.

You can assume that your reading audience understands the fundamentals of the obesity issue among the population of school-age children and you do not need to include extensive background data on that health issue. You can include a couple of background sentences to set the context; use your best judgment on this.

Be sure to refer to the grading rubrics before *and after* you write your final paper. You should be sure that you have incorporated all of the assignment requirements into your final submission.

Formatting Requirements

The final policy analysis paper should be between 3000 and 3500 words and formatted as follows: Arial type, 12pt font, 1.5 spacing, and 1” margins, including charts and graphs but excluding references.

[Final Policy Analysis Template](#)

A note regarding citation style in all assignments: GPH 702 students who are enrolled in the MPH and MAN programs should use the AMA citation style as required in your other courses. GPH 702 students who are enrolled in other UNE courses can use either the AMA style or the APA style. See the syllabus for further detail.

Building to the Policy Analysis

GPH 702 is designed so that each week's assignment builds toward the development of a final policy analysis due in Week 7. The course follows Bardach and Patashnik's *Eightfold Path* text and incorporates their trajectory in the policy analysis process. You have been provided with a policy proposal (the Policy Scenario) to consider and you will choose one of the three governmental levels at which the proposed policy might be implemented. The Policy Scenario identifies a proposal for BMI screening in public schools as part of the federal requirement for schools to develop Wellness Plans. During Weeks 3 through 7 you will work in small groups for discussion and feedback and you are individually tasked with working through the policy analysis steps outlined in the text.

Week 3

In Week 3 you will experiment with articulating your perspective on any "problem(s)" with the proposed policy and you will receive feedback from your groupmates. Based on that feedback and on your own evolving thinking and learning about the issues, you will refine your statement and submit a final version. You may find over the subsequent weeks that you want to go back and revise or update your initial statement -- and that is fine (even encouraged!).

Please note that the policy at issue is the proposed BMI screening policy. While BMI screening might be an upstream approach to addressing obesity over the longer term, this assignment should not be interpreted to mean that the policy "problem" is obesity in general. This assignment is requesting you to consider issues, concerns, benefits, and risks with the proposed BMI policy itself from your particular professional perspective. When you are invited to speak at any of the public forums (local, state, federal) on this proposed policy, what is it that you might want the policymakers to know and consider in their decision? For instance, if you are a public health professional, you might be particularly concerned about how this screening policy impacts sub-populations such as low-income communities or racially and culturally diverse communities. If you are a social worker, you might focus on a contemporaneous risk assessment for peer experiences of bullying and victimization.

As an example*, in Week 3 you might identify ethnic and racial disparities as one of the essential issues that result from the government's adoption of the BMI screening program. A BMI screening program that is blind to race, gender, ethnicity, or income level in its implementation could result in an increase in mental health issues, eating disorders, and bullying (provide citations to demonstrate the evidence for that claim). This is the policy "problem".

**This is provided as an example only; you will identify your own policy problems.*

Week 4

In Week 4 you will gather evidence and support for your position and test ways to represent this information in text, charts, and/or graphs in order to make the most effective and impactful presentation. Keep in mind that while some or all of this information might be used in your final analysis paper, you may also want to refer to some of it in your oral testimony, so consider how you might talk about the information in a way that is easily understood by your audience.

For our example problem, in Week 4, you would provide contextual evidence for your policy problem. This could include evidence that the District's school age population is racially and ethnically diverse, and moderately low income (provide citations). You could add charts or graphs to depict the data. You might also provide evidence that with respect to analogous programs for academic tracking (e.g. reading or math proficiency), there is significant negative fallout (provide citations) on children unless supportive services in the form of strength-based assessments and interventions are simultaneously offered.

Weeks 5 & 6

In Week 5 you will examine various options to address the issues you identified with the policy proposal (the problems identified in Week 3). You will consider several alternatives, modifications, or additional detail to the proposed BMI screening policy in order to address your defined policy problem. In Week 6 you will weigh the appropriateness of those options according to certain evaluative criteria, such as effectiveness, efficiency, cost, expedience, equity, or feasibility. Some of these criteria may be obviously met or not met with certain options, but others may need to be evaluated in light of the audience's views, the political climate, the demographics or other circumstances of the community (or state, or other geographic region at issue). In Week 6, be sure to evaluate each of your options against the other in a "trade-offs" manner as Bardach describes on page 65. Also address (if you have not fully done so in Week 5) any likely unintended consequences (even if they are positive ones).

For those of you who are familiar with using logic models, you might find it helpful to create a simple one to think through your policy options and the likely inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

This exercise may be one method to use to organize and evaluate your policy options before deciding on final recommendations.

For our example problem, in Week 5 you might consider the use of a Peer Experiences Questionnaire along with the BMI screen in order to assess bullying or other peer-behaviors risk for each child (background info and citations provided). This is just one option; you will propose a total of three (3) for your policy problem in Week 5 and in Week 6 you will evaluate each of your options.

Week 7

See information above on the Final Project