

International Education Policy Studies Tentative Syllabus

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This is a collaborative initiative with UNICEF’s Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS). There are two components to this initiative:

- Training or capacity-building on educational research and policy analysis in the area of teacher research (in particular, teacher quality and teacher shortage indicators)
- The output of the training or capacity-building component consists in a series of assignments or products that, taken together, constitute a cross-national study on teacher quality and teacher shortage in the CEE/CIS region.

Put differently, the course provides the foundation for educational research methods and policy analysis on a particular topic and in a particular region: the measurement of teacher quality and teacher shortage at school level in selected countries of the CEE/CIS region.

The course “International Education Policy Studies” consists of two parts: part 1 is offered during the spring semester 2010 and part 2 during summer session A 2010. This will allow students from Teachers College, Columbia University (TC) to take the course for 4-6 credits.

Background: In spring/summer 2009, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan commissioned a study on teacher quality and teacher shortage that greatly resonated in the education policy community in Kyrgyzstan. The study was also presented at the Central Asian Forum on Education, organized by UNICEF in September 2009. The study identified 11 indicators for measuring real teacher shortage, including for example, number of retired teacher, university students, non-pedagogical specialists, course teachers, teachers with excessive number of teaching hours that are far beyond the normative teaching load, substitute teachers, etc. who teach in schools of Kyrgyzstan. In some countries of the region teacher shortage only exists in rural areas and/or for specific subjects or grade levels. In other countries, however, teacher shortage is ubiquitous but yet masked because of creative coping strategies at school level. Many of these coping or survival strategies of schools—for example, redistributing vacant hours to other teachers at a school—have a negative impact on student learning. The course or the study, respectively, attempts to identify regional as well as country-specific issues with regard to teacher supply, teacher quality, and recruitment into teaching (graduates from pedagogical degree program that enter the teaching profession). In addition to collecting data on teacher shortage and teacher quality at school level and gathering

statistical information at district and central level, the class will also analyze relevant policies and “best practices” in the participating countries, in the region, but also in other parts of the world that attempt to enhance teacher attractiveness and retention.

Composition of Class

The following national UNICEF offices will participate in the course and the regional study: Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and possibly Bosnia and Herzegovina. Data collection will take place in these participating countries. UNICEF Kyrgyzstan carried out the study in spring/summer 2009 and will participate in the course to share their experiences. Data collection will not take place in Kyrgyzstan.

The composition of class is mixed:

- 6 or more education officers of UNICEF in the six national offices
- 6 or more government officials and/or NGO partners of UNICEF
- 12 M.A., Ed.M. or doctoral students from Teachers College, Columbia University

Only TC students with prior international work experiences and/or policy expertise will be selected for participation in this study/course.

These 24 participants or “students” will form 6 national research teams (members: 2 from the country, 2 from New York) and collaboratively finalize the data collection instruments, collect data, analyze data, interpret data, write up national reports, analyze relevant policies and develop a policy brief with recommendations. TC students take the course for credit and the UNICEF participants (including UNICEF affiliated partners) are learners and informants but are not enrolled at Teachers College, Columbia University. Thus, it is expected that the TC members of the national research teams take charge of the assignments with active input and support from the UNICEF participants.

Instructional Design

The course also uses a mixed instructional design:

- Distance learning with the Blackboard platform:
 - Ten 1-hour virtual class sessions on the foundation of education research methods and policy analysis applied to the national studies on teacher quality and teacher shortage: 7 sessions in the period January 25 until April 30, 2010, and 3 sessions in the period May 24 until June 28.
 - Weekly 40-minute virtual advisement sessions in the period January 25 until June 25 with 3 two-week breaks in March, May and June.
 - Discussion board (asynchronous chat/postings on Blackboard) in which questions from class are clarified and participants share their work in progress and findings on the cross-national study.
 - Modules (total: 10) with powerpoint presentations or reading material that either relate to teacher research, policy studies or general research methods.
- Face-to-face seminars:

- Mondays, January 25, February 1, February 8, February 15, time: 3 – 5 PM, in New York – *TC section of class only*: overview of the course, instructions on how to use Blackboard, essentials on course planning, study/discussion of ongoing educational reforms in the participating countries of the CEE/CIS region
- Mondays, April 12, 19, 26, time: 3 – 5 PM, in New York – *TC section of class only*: data analysis and write-up of technical reports.
- June 9-13 (tentative days), 2010, 10 AM – 6 PM, in Istanbul – *entire class*: presentation of findings and policy briefs, identification of cross-national themes and policy recommendations, planning of national and regional publications.
 Note that the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) is holding its conference in Istanbul, June 14-18, 2010. The research teams are encouraged to present their findings at the WCCES conference. They will receive in this course academic support to submit an abstract and prepare their presentation for the conference. Abstract submission is due at the end of February. More information on the conference can be found at the following website: <http://www.wcces2010.org/>
- In-country data collection: March 10 – 24 (2 weeks in country)
 - The six research teams will collect data in their respective countries. Approximately 9 days are reserved for data collection in the selected schools, 2 days for interviews and meetings with central, province, and/or district government officials, and 2 days for meetings among the members of the research teams. The UNICEF
 - TC students will be accompanied during the data collection at school level as well as in government offices either by a UNICEF staff member or a UNICEF partner.

Each TC student is expected to allocate at the minimum 1 day per week for this class. The 2 UNICEF sponsored participants from each country should spend 1 day per week combined. That is, each UNICEF sponsored participant should spend approximately 4-5 hours per week (half a day/week) for this courses and research study. The selected TC students are partially funded for travel and accommodation cost by UNICEF: 1 TC student per national team is fully funded for data collection and 1 TC student is fully funded to participate in the face-to-face seminar in Istanbul. However, both TC students must participate in the in-country data collection and in the face-to-face seminar in Istanbul. This means that approximately half of the costs has to be funded from own sources.

Content

The ten modules (combination of powerpoint, reading, web resources) cover the following content:

- Module 1: Research on Teacher Quality and Teacher Shortage
- Module 2: Research on Teacher Salary Reforms and Incentives, Recruitment into Teaching
- Module 3: Social Science Research Methodology: Validity and Reliability of Research, Triangulation of Data, Sampling Methods and Case Study Selection Criteria
- Module 4: Design of Data Collection Instruments: Techniques for Individual Interviews, Focus Group Interviews, Survey Design
- Module 5: Methods for Data Analysis
- Module 6: Data Analysis
- Module 7: Interpreting the Data
- Module 8: Identifying Findings
- Module 9: Developing Evidence-Based Policy Recommendations

Module 10: Writing a Policy Brief on Teacher Quality and Teacher Shortage

Reading

Participants are strongly encouraged to purchase the following textbook of this course:

Burke, Johnson & Larry Christensen (2008). *Educational Research. Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches* (third edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Assignments

The course is product-oriented. All assignments build towards developing a high-quality national research report on teacher quality and shortage and eventually publications (under the name of UNICEF). The following assignments need to be submitted as a group/national research team:

Assignments		Due Date
SPRING SEMESTER 2010		
Assignment 1	Annotated Bibliography on “Teacher Characteristics, Supply, and Policies in ... [name of participating country]”; reflects a review of existing country-specific statistical information, studies, policy documents	February 3
Assignment 2	Sampling plan & country-specific research questions	February 17
Assignment 3	Data collection instruments (including nationally added questions)	February 24
Assignment 4	Data Collection Report and Data Inventory	March 31
Assignment 5	Draft Technical Report with Statistical Analysis of Collected Data	April 21
SUMMER A SEMESTER 2010		
Assignment 1a	Final Technical Report on Study	May 26
Assignment 2a	Sub-Sector Review “Teacher Characteristics, Supply, and Policies in ...” (included review of existing studies/statistical material as well as collected data/information)	June 2
Assignment 3a	National Policy Brief on Teacher Quality and Supply (with revised sub-sector review as an appendix)	June 23

The participants will be provided with detailed and clear instructions for preparing the assignments/products.

Schedule and Time-Line

We suggest to always schedule the weekly advisement sessions (national research team with professor) at the same time, such as for example, on Wednesdays, 8 or 9 AM New York time (afternoon/evening) in the CEE/CIS region. The definite time will be fixed after input from the course participants. Similarly, we will fix the exact time for the virtual class sessions (entire class meets in a chat room of the Blackboard platform) once the course starts.

Please note that the 10 modules and the weekly advisement sessions are not listed in the following schedule. The 10 modules will be presented and discussed over the period end of January until end of April.

Week of ...	Interaction	Assignments/Products/Output
January 25	Virtual Class Session 1	
February 1	Virtual Class Session 2	Annotated Bibliography
February 8	Virtual Class Session 3	
February 15		Sampling Plan & Research Questions
February 22	Virtual Class Session 4	Data Collection Instruments
March 1		
March 10 – 24 Data Collection in Participating Countries		
March 22		
March 29	Virtual Class Session 5	Data Collection Report & Data Inventory
April 5		
April 12	Virtual Class Session 6	
April 19		Technical Report (Draft)
April 26	Virtual Class Session 7	
May 3		
May 10 – 23 Break/Holiday		
May 24	Virtual Class Session 8	Technical Report (Final)
May 31	Virtual Class Session 9	Sub-Sector Review
June 9 –13 (tentative date) Face-to-Face Seminar in Istanbul, Turkey		
June 21		National Policy-Brief
June 28	Virtual Class Session 10	

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