Syllabus Structure:

In the second semester, we will address four questions about the development of effective evolutionary-learning organizations that we did not resolve in the first semester: (1) How can and should democratic participation factor into evolutionary learning? (2) What tools can an organization use to receive and respond to the “weak signals” of experience that are a hallmark of the evolutionary learning model? (3) More generally, how can organizations that currently function as bureaucracies transition to an evolutionary learning structure? (4) What arrangements are possible when the development of an effective evolutionary-learning structure is too complex or difficult for a single organization to accomplish on its own?

The semester begins with two sessions exploring the importance and challenges of broad community participation in experimentalist problem-solving. As usual, we will explore these questions using case studies as well as broader theoretical perspectives. We will then turn to several sessions covering actual “tools” that an organization might use to learn from its own experience. After familiarizing ourselves with the “balanced scorecard” approach to organizational goal-setting and evaluation, we will turn to qualitative evaluation of organizations (including schools), ask members of the class to construct their own balanced score card for use in guiding and tracking the success of schools, and then shift the perspective from evaluation of organizations to evaluation of an organization’s employees (i.e., teachers). The next session – a panel discussion on charter schools – forms a bridge between the discussion of experimentalist tools, on the one hand, and the question of organizational transition, on the other hand: charter schools arguably represent both. The last session before spring break directly addresses the question of transitioning from bureaucracy to evolutionary learning, focusing on case studies of a number of organizations that have made the leap. After spring break, we will address the fourth framing question with several sessions on learning “regimes” that link multiple organizations in a single experimentalist structure, or foster experimentalism in the spaces between organizations, or combine experimentalism with other governance models. After examining case studies of these regimes in the private and public sectors, we will address the question whether the US system of education federalism (in which, federal, state, and local governments all play a role) is or can be remade as such a regime. We will end the year with student project presentations and a panel discussion of the future of education reform.

Sessions #15: January 22, 2014
Public Problem Solving and Democracy: Part I
Reading:
5. Bridgeport:
6. Optional: Oliver C. Moles, Jr. & Arnold F. Fege, New Directions for Title 1 Family Engagement: Lessons from the Past, Handbook on Family and Community Engagement, at 3 (title page), 5 (introductory § only), 8 (very end of page) – 12

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What forms of politics and democracy do you see being implemented:
   a. In the “Traxton” example in Professor Fung’s article on community policing?
   b. In the Bridgeport “parent working group” example?
   c. In the challenge issued by Washington, D.C. Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson to parents opposing the closure of their schools?
2. How are these approaches to politics and democracy similar or different?
3. How promising are these approaches (and how effective were they in the particular contexts described) and what challenges and obstacles do the approaches face?
4. What do these examples suggest about the possibility of overcoming the obstacles Whitman discusses to authentic stake-holder participation and problem-solving?

Sessions #16: January 29, 2014
Public Problem Solving and Democracy: Part II

**Reading:**
1. Christopher K. Ansell, Pragmatist Democracy, supra at 134-40, 166-83
2. Jeffrey Henig et al., Parent and Community Engagement in NYC and the Sustainability Challenge for Urban Education Reform, inO’Day et al., supra, at 33-38, 43-45 (ending with first paragraph of “The Three Groups” section), 46, 48-54
Discussion Questions:
1. In a portion of Ansell we read earlier, he stated that, “Organizational transformation of public agencies cannot easily occur without fundamental change in the relationship between agencies and democratic publics.” (p.17) Thus far, we have spent a lot of time talking about organizational transformation of public regimes, but not so much on how those regimes interact with their “democratic publics.” What kinds of changes in politics and democracy does Ansell have in mind? How do they differ from “normal politics” that are familiar at the local, state, and federal levels in contexts such as public education, health care, deficit reduction, etc?
2. Ansell’s point suggests that for every governance model of how public agencies should be organized and administered, there is a corresponding approach to politics and democratic interaction. Taking that claim at face value for a moment, what form of politics and democracy would seem to fit best with bureaucracies? With performance management (New Public Management)? With professionalism/craft? With experimentalist regimes? In each case, what is the role of representation? Direct democracy? Interest or intermediary groups? Experts vs non-experts? Elections versus other forms of deliberation and participation?
3. Suppose, on the other hand, that, given the interplay of unevenly distributed resources, other economic realities, and divergent individual preferences, interest-group politics is the only stable or “natural” form of democratic interaction between the public and public actors and agencies. If that were the case—in other words, if “fundamental change in the relationship between agencies and democratic publics”—is not possible because one (the existing) form naturally predominates, would that mean that “organizational transformation of public agencies” of the sort Ansell contemplates is unlikely or impossible? Do you think interest-group politics are "natural" and immutable?
4. What form of politics and democracy do Professor Henig and colleagues suggest were necessary or best suited to the period during which the Bloomberg/Klein education reforms were taking in New York City (2003 to 2010)? What form of politics and democracy did Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein instead prefer? Do you agree with Henig et al. or Bloomberg-Klein about the best approach to engaging the public? Is there an alternative to those two competing approaches?

Writing Assignment: Write a ~2-page paper, due as a MS Word attachment emailed to CPRL@law.columbia.edu by Tuesday January 28, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. that incorporates discussion of any two of the case studies in the first two sessions (Traxton, D.C., Bridgeport, NYC) to address the issues raised in questions 2 and 3, above: is it possible to avoid interest-group politics? And if so, what is (are) the alternative(s)?

Session #17: February 5, 2014
Tools Supporting Structured Public Learning: The “Balanced Scorecard” Approach to Strategy and Accountability
Reading:

Discussion Questions:
1. What is the objective of the Balanced Score Card (“BSC”) and of allied measurement strategies? What role do measurement and accountability play? What role do leading and lagging indicators play?
2. How are the Kaplan & Norton and Kusek & Rist approaches to using measurement to improve success similar and different? Do you see any basis for preferring one over the other in general or in particular circumstances?
3. The title of this session suggests that there is an affinity between the BSC (and allied measurement strategies) and institutional learning. What affinities (or discontinuities) do you see? Why or why not might these approaches be equally or more clearly understood as management-based or performance-based tools? Market-mimicking tools? Bureaucratic oversight tools?
4. What critique of these tools might adherents of “craft” or “professionalism” make?
5. Imagine an institution with which you are familiar and how it might go about designing a BSC to advance its objectives—and exercise you will soon be asked to undertake for a state or local school system. What value do you see to the exercise? What difficulties? How would your answers differ if the institution in question had only recently been created or reorganized versus one that has been in existence and relatively unchanged for a long time?

Session #18: February 12, 2014
The Role of Qualitative Review in Strategically Structured Public Learning: Using Leading Indicators to Build Expertise and Harness Street-Level Discretion

Reading:
3. Anemona Hartocollis, New York City Ties Doctors’ Income to Quality of Care, N.Y. Times, Jan. 11, 2013
4. Qualitative Evaluation of Schools:
b. Quality Review Rubric 1: NYC Quality Review Rubric, Composite of 2007-2010


**Discussion Questions:**

1. What differences are there in the qualitative review procedures used in support of: nursing home regulation in the US as opposed to Australia; child welfare services in Utah and Alabama; and quality of health care provided by doctors in public hospitals in New York?

2. To what extent do these differences map to differences in the governance model being implemented in each case, be it, for example, a model driven by professionalism, experimentalism, performance-management, or bureaucracy? To what extent do they map to the dichotomy between “rules” and “standards” that is discussed in the Noonan piece?

3. Are the outcomes of these various kinds of inspections and reviews lagging or leading indicators—or something else entirely? Do the authors make any assumptions about which type of indicator each category of review or inspection should provide under the circumstances? What type of indicator do you believe each category or review or inspection should strive to be, and why?

4. In what ways do the different approaches to review and inspection serve or disserve the values and objectives promoted by Balanced Score Cards and allied measurement schemes?

5. A chief worry of doctors contemplating pay differences based on quality of care is that “they could be penalized for conditions they cannot control, including how clean the hospital floors are, the attentiveness of nurses and the availability of beds.” Are these conditions over which doctors have no control? Consider differences in background health conditions of the patients of hospitals in different neighborhoods. Might doctors in hospitals in impoverished neighborhoods where health conditions are generally worse fear that they will be penalized because they have chosen or been assigned to work with more challenging patients who are sicker when they are admitted and thus likely to have less favorable outcomes on average? Might this have the perverse effect of encouraging “better” doctors to prefer jobs in hospitals in more affluent neighborhoods, increasing inequities already faced by patients in poor neighborhoods? (This, of course, is a problem also faced in reviewing nursing homes, child welfare services, and schools.) Are there any solutions for this problem other than not evaluating doctors based on quality?

6. Relatedly, continue, as you began to do in the last session, to imagine an institution with which you are familiar and for which you have been asked to designing a BSC. What model of qualitative review, if any, might you adopt?

7. What similarities and differences do you see when you compare:
a. Quality review of schools in New Zealand, the Netherlands, and New York?

b. The two Quality Review rubrics for New York?

8. What links do you see between the various school quality reviews and the different governance models we have discussed in class?

9. "Validity" refers to whether measures used reflect the conditions or outcomes that are actually of interest. (E.g., thermometers provide a valid reflection of body temperature, but do not provide as valid a reflection of health; in the latter regard, that is, they are an imperfect "proxy" for health.) In your view, how "valid" (in this sense) are the measures proposed in the qualitative review rubrics in the reading? What measures would be more valid?

10. "Reliability" refers to how effectively a measurement scheme determines whether a particular condition (which condition may or may not be "valid" in the sense used above) is present. (E.g., thermometers may, in theory, provide a valid reflection of body temperature, but differences in the manufacture and use of thermometers may lead to unreliability -i.e., to different readings of the body temperature of the same person at the same time.) How "reliable" in this sense do you think the various methods of qualitative review described are? This is the issue of "inter-rater reliability." Is the likelihood of inter-rater unreliability" the death knell of qualitative review, or does it present some an opportunity of some sort for making particularly good use of such observations?

Session #19: February 19, 2014
Building a Better State or Local Balanced Scorecard for Public Education

Reading:
1. Example 1: New York City’s Accountability System
   c. New York City Accountability and Results, 2002-2012
   d. NY Times Room for Debate, Making the Grade in NYC (Oct. 9, 2012)
   f. Optional: New York City Department of Education, What’s Next for School Accountability in New York City, November 2013

2. Examples 2-3: Differentiated Accountability and Support Systems included in ESEA Waiver applications for New Mexico and South Dakota, as described in Center for Education Policy, What Impact Will NCLB Waivers Have on the Consistency, Complexity and Transparency of State Accountability Systems? (2012), at 1-13, 20-21, 24-27
3. **Optional:** Grading the No Child Left Behind Waivers, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, By Morgan S. Polikoff, Andrew McEachin, Stephani L. Wrabel, and Matthew Duque, February 2014.

4. **Example 4:** Zoom team slides on RAES system

5. **Example 5:** The Pew Forum on Education Reform, Excerpts from “A Tribute to Al Shanker” (reprinted from Ed Week, May 14, 1997), pp. 35-37 only (“Al Shanker Speaks ...”)

**Writing Assignment:**
During this session, we will conduct an exercise in class designed to help you build towards your final Balanced Scorecards (BSC), which are due on February 25th.

To prepare for that exercise, we ask that each of you **come to class on the 19th with a written outline or rough draft of the BSC you plan to turn in on the 25th.** We will not grade those outlines/drafts or make them a formal assignment, but if you are able to do so, please **send us your outline or draft by 4 pm on Tuesday the 19th,** so we some examples to use in class discussion.

We would specifically ask that the students on call for next week -- **Kirstin Lewis, Sara Osborne, and Martin Wong** -- provide us with your draft by 4 pm on the 19th (again, it won’t be graded but may be used as an example in class).

Balanced Scorecards (BSC): As an **MS Word or Excel attachment, prepare and email to CPRL@law.columbia.edu by Tuesday February 25, 2014 at 1:00 p.m.,** an outline or sketch of a balanced scorecard for use by a state education department, school district, or school to hold school(s) accountable for satisfying the relevant jurisdiction’s goals for promoting student learning and development. In your paper, please indicate:

a. The school or set of schools to which your balanced scored card applies

b. The kinds of measures you consider to be “valid” for this purpose, as that term is defined in the Discussion Questions for Session 18.

Your outline or sketch need not address all of the following matters but should consider some of them, among other topics that you believe are important:

i. The appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative (e.g., test score and other) measures, in any, and of leading and lagging indicators, if any

ii. The tools you would use to determine how well schools and/or educators are performing on those measures

iii. The weights to be accorded to different measures

iv. Whether outcomes would or would not be publicly disclosed

v. The stakes or consequences, if any, attached to particular outcomes
Discussion Questions:
(Your writing assignment is not expected to address these questions explicitly, but you should be prepared to discuss them orally in class.)

1. What considerations drove the design of your balanced score card?
2. What role, if any, did different governance models play in your design?
3. Did you follow any particular model or example (e.g., Kaplan & Norton; Kuzek & Rist; any of those in the readings for this or earlier weeks), and why?
4. How did you solve for the problem of student- and school-level differences that arise because students and teachers are not randomly assigned to schools, leaving some schools and teachers with much more challenging student populations than others?
5. How do you imagine Albert Shanker would have gone about holding schools accountable? Which governance model(s) does Shanker appear to favor?

Session #20: February 26, 2014
Evaluating Teachers Qualitatively and Quantitatively

Reading:
1. Qualitative Teacher Evaluation Rubrics:
   c. NYC Abbreviated Danielson Rubric
2. Quantitative Measures of Teaching:
   a. Eric Hanushek, We Need Better Teachers, Defining Ideas, April 1, 2014.
   c. Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman & Jonah Rockoff, The Long Term Impacts of Teachers, Executive Summary
   d. Optional: watch Chetty et al. video (40 minutes): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vh22HBZMHvM
   e. The MET Project, Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching: Culminating Findings from the MET Project’s Three-Year Study (Jan. 2013), http://metproject.org/downloads/MET_Ensuring_Fair_and_Reli
3. Teacher Evaluation in Operation:
   d. Optional: Frederick Hess and Whitney Downs, Combatting the Culture of Can't, Education Next, Spring 2013.

4. The Reality and Value of Teacher Autonomy:
   a. Ulrich Boser and Robert Hanna, In the Quest to Improve Schools, Have Teachers Been Stripped of Their Autonomy?, Center for American Progress, Jan. 21, 2014.

Discussion Questions:
1. Continuing the mental exercise from the last two classes, in thinking about building a balanced scorecard for an institution with which you are familiar, how valuable (or not) is each of these approaches to teacher evaluation as a model for a key component of your balanced scorecard? As a leading or lagging indicator?
2. Based on the empirical evidence on the relative value and correlation of test scores, student surveys, and observations of teachers as components of teacher-evaluation schemes, how would you balance these various ways of evaluating teachers?
3. How do the two rubrics (three, including Pianta & Hamre) in the reading fare on the criteria proposed by last week’s readings (Braithwaites, Noonan et al.) for predicting the usefulness of qualitative review schemes?
4. In your view, how “valid” (as defined in the Discussion Questions for Session 18) are the measures proposed in the teacher-evaluation rubrics in the reading? What measures would be more valid? Can those measures be encapsulated in a quality review rubric for teachers?
5. How “reliable” (as defined in the Discussion Questions for Session 18) are the various methods of teacher evaluation described here? How do the readings from last week (Braithwaites, Noonan et al.) bear on this question?
6. How would Baker et al. hold teachers accountable?
7. To what extent do the findings of the MET Project and Chetty et al. answer the concerns of Baker et al. and resolve the major issues in the long-running teacher-evaluation debate?
8. The balanced scorecard discussion of the previous few sessions focused on evaluating organizations; could the concept of a balanced scorecard apply equally well to the evaluation of individual employees, such as teachers? Why or why not? To what extent do the examples of teacher evaluation discussed in the readings reflect the balanced scorecard approach? How could or should they be revised in light of that approach? 

Teacher-Observation Exercise: To be described in class. In preparation for class, please familiarize yourself with the NYC Abbreviated Danielson Rubric listed above.

Session #21: March 5, 2014

1. Charter Schools – the Evidence Thus Far in New York City and Elsewhere
   a. Margaret Raymond, Multiple Choice: Charter School Study in 16 States (CREDO at Stanford University 2009), at 1-4 (Executive Summary excerpts), http://credo.stanford.edu/reports/MULTIPLE_CHOICE_CREDO.pdf
   b. Margaret Raymond, Charter School Performance in New York City (CREDO at Stanford University 2010), at 2 (Summary), http://credo.stanford.edu/reports/NYC%202009%20_CREDO.pdf

2. Charter Schools as Components of School Systems:


3. Criticism of Charter Schools:

Discussion Questions:

1. Given the evidence in the reading about how charter schools work, what do they have to offer as solutions, or contributions to solving, the problems of public K-12 education?
   a. Do charter schools harm or improve student life chances? What accounts for the different results in the two Raymond studies and the Hoxby study?
   b. Even if charter schools can improve the results of students who attend them, are they bad for “school system(s)” they affect? In what ways? What do you make of suggestions in the reading that charter schools are a right wing conspiracy or a left wing conspiracy?
   c. Can charter schools be scaled to reach 100% of urban school children as Kingsland suggests? How would you expect a “100% solution” to affect the results the Raymond and Hoxby studies reach?
   d. As far as you can tell from the reading, is the role of charter schools the same or different in Cleveland, New Orleans, New York, the Philadelphia plan as originally conceived (May 2012), the “portfolio districts” that Hill & Campbell discuss?
      i. To what extent do any of those roles qualify as “privatization”? To what extent do any of them qualify as components of a K-12 learning “regime” – and, if any do qualify, how do they contribute to such regimes?
      ii. Apart from the answer to the question just above, in what ways could charter schools contribute to a K-12 learning regime?
      iii. In what ways, if any, would you expect “privatizing” and/or “learning” uses of charter schools to maximize their positive impact on student outcomes?

Pre-Class Assignment: Email to CPRL@law.columbia.edu by Tuesday March 4, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. the two hardest questions you can think to
ask the panelists about the role of charters in meeting the needs of underserved public school children.

Session #22: March 12, 2014
Transitioning from Bureaucracy to the New Age Organization

Reading
1. Ansell, supra, ch. 3, pp. 43-55, 61-62
2. Examples:
   a. Aldine, Texas: Heather Zavadsky, Bringing School Reform to Scale (2009), Ch. 2, District Approach #1 (Aldine School District)
   b. Norfolk, Virginia: Zavadsky, supra, Ch.6, District Approach #3 (Norfolk School District)
      i. Note from Prof. Liebman: I agree with Professor Nadelstern’s retrospective judgments about how the New York City reform could have been improved, but I would add one failing of the Networks that has kept them from becoming the key intermediary Nadelstern imagines: The networks had two somewhat competing objectives that had to be kept in balance, self-consciously, in a structured way: (1) support schools operationally (fending off the bureaucracy) and (2) promote and facilitate, without dictating steps schools were to take to assure, improvement of student achievement. Because the Networks were always palpably accountable for the former objective, because schools only opted into networks they trusted to serve them operationally, but Networks were not effectively held accountable for student improvement, the Networks took their service obligations more seriously than their achievement-facilitation role.

Writing Assignment: Write a ~2-page paper, due as a MS Word attachment emailed to CPRL@law.columbia.edu by Tuesday March 12, 2014 at 3:00 p.m., on your understanding of the “transformation strategy” (as defined below) that was implemented in Aldine, Norfolk, or New York City; what its strengths and weaknesses are (including compared to the transformation strategies used in the other cities); how you would have improved on that strategy; how useful you think the transformation strategy would be in different K-12 contexts (e.g., federal vs. state vs. local; large vs. small; urban vs. rural; collegial vs. conflictual; ones with strong or weak unions, etc.); how do Ansell’s insights bear on your judgments; and what does the example you focus on suggest about the validity of, or
weaknesses in, Ansell’s analysis. **By “transformation strategy,” I do not mean the governance or instructional strategy itself that each district adopted (e.g., “empowerment” in NYC), but instead the strategy the district adopted for moving the institution and its people to give up the old ways and embrace and adopt the new ways.** For example, two districts that both decide to adopt a performance-management system focused on teacher-evaluation outcomes could make the transition to that common approach in very different ways, depending upon, for example, how abrupt or gradual the change is; how the change is introduced, explained and phased-in; who participated in deciding on a strategy and on the details of its implementation; etc. It is the latter set of choices that you should address in this paper.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How would you characterize the transition strategy implemented in Aldine? Norfolk? New York City? What is the appropriate scale for comparing transition strategies (e.g., evolution vs. revolution; top-down vs. bottom-up)?
2. Which transition strategy seems to be most promising or to have worked best? Why?
3. One claim that is sometimes made in support of strategies based on newly created charter schools or to justify more comprehensive (“start from scratch”), less incremental approaches to school turnaround is that it is easier to build learning institutions from scratch than to transform bureaucracies into them? Do you agree with that claim? What examples from the reading over the course of the year support or contradict this view? What is an example of a successful transformation of a previously bureaucratic institution?
4. Even if it is more difficult to transform bureaucracies than to replace them wholesale, there sometimes are no alternatives to transformation. In those cases, what steps are most likely to facilitate effective transformation? Are there kinds of organizations or organizational conditions that support or impede transformation?
5. How important are charismatic or determined leaders? Can existing organizations transform themselves, and sustain the changes, without charismatic leadership? What are the implications of your answer for the likely success of transformation efforts? Given example from the readings for this week and for the year that support your views on these questions.

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**Spring Break: Week of March 17**

**Session #23: March 26, 2014**

Learning “Regimes” and the Elastic Boundaries of Private-Sector Learning “Organizations”: Dis-integrated Firms, Inter-firm Collaboration, and Private Associations
Reading:

Discussion Questions:
1. In what ways can organizations blur or reach beyond their boundaries with other entities – and in what ways can public organizations blur or reach outside the public/private boundary – in search of better pathways to success? In this context, reconsider Ansell’s claim that institutions can be collectively controlled and revised but that, in the process, “institutional design must be closely attentive to ways that institutions are complexly ‘scaffolded’ by webs of related institutions” (14)
2. How would you define a “regime” of the sort(s) described in the reading? What is the value of thinking about organizational and governance arrangements as “regimes” of this sort?
3. In the examples in Gilson, et al.:
   a. Why did the companies involved vertically disintegrate? What did they gain and lose by taking that step?
   b. What’s in it (or what’s lost) for the satellite organizations that operate within the larger organization’s orbit?
   c. To what extent does “cooperation” as opposed to “cooptation” or “subjugation” describe the interaction between the larger and satellite organizations?
4. In your experience and based on prior readings, how do simulated markets attempt to engage regulated entities in regulating themselves? How do “learning” regimes try to do the same? Which works better when and why?
5. In the INPO example offered by Rees:
   a. How much or little does the INPO arrangement for regulating the safety of nuclear power plants add to or detract from your confidence in the ability to generate power safely through nuclear fission? What aspects of the arrangement influence your conclusion the most?
   b. What role in the arrangement is played by the Nuclear Regulatory Agency?
   c. What role is played by secrecy in the disclosure of results?
   d. What role is played by organizational or industry “culture” and what accounts for changes in that culture?
   e. What else is the secret for success – assuming you see any evidence of success?
How promising is the INPO model for regulating other kinds of environmental harm, e.g., from deep-water oil drilling? Would technology-based regulation or market simulation work better?

Session #24: April 2, 2014
Learning “Regimes” and the Elastic Boundaries of Public-Sector Learning “Organizations”: From Rotten Cantaloupes to Equality Directives

Reading:

Discussion Questions:
1. Do the Hart & Sacks and other examples of legal, governance, or organizational “regimes” described in the reading clarify, or confuse, that concept, or give you a different perspective on the value of thinking about organizational and governance arrangements as “regimes” of this sort?
2. As a consumer of leafy greens, meat, and other foodstuffs, do the changes in regulation in those contexts described by Sabel & Simon give you more or less confidence that what you eat is safe? What aspects of the old and new forms of regulation account for your answer?
3. What difficulties has enforcement of civil rights norms encountered over the last several decades? In what ways, if any, do the experimentalist approaches and/or the “equality directives” described in the readings change those dynamics? How, if at all, do Professors Sabel and Simon’s and Professor Johnson’s accounts of these new approaches overlap or differ?

Session #25: April 9, 2014
Education Federalism as a Learning Regime?

Reading:


4. Martin A. Kurzweil, *Disciplined Devolution and the New Education Federalism* (2013) (Read the Introduction (pp. 2-7) and Parts II, III, and IV (pp. 23-57))


**Students with last names beginning with A-G** should review the following reading from Session 21: Paul Hill & Christine Campbell, *Growing Number of Districts Seek Bold Change with Portfolio Strategy* (Center on Reinventing Public Education June 2011), at 1-3


**Discussion Questions:**

1. How did the No Child Left Behind Act impact the relationship between federal, state, and local governments with respect to education, according to
   a. Tucker?
   b. Liebman & Sabel?
   c. Manna?
   d. Kurzweil?

2. Tucker dismisses both traditional local control of education and what he sees as the expanding federal role in dictating education policy under the Obama Administration. He instead advocates for state governments to assume the largest role in education policy. What are the advantages and drawbacks to such an approach? Does Tucker’s position correspond to one (or more) of the governance models we’ve discussed?

3. Contra Tucker, Kurzweil contends that the Obama Administration’s education reforms – especially the ESEA waivers – do not dictate policy, but instead require states and localities to work within a structured
process to develop and refine their own policies. Based on Kurzweil’s evidence, or perhaps Duncan’s description of Tennessee’s experience with Race to the Top and the ESEA waivers, are you convinced? Why or why not?

4. Is the system that Kurzweil describes evolutionary learning/experimentalism? Or is it something else?

5. Based on all this, does it make sense to view the federal system of education management (national, state, and local control) as a “learning regime”? What conditions have to hold for that to be true?

6. The description of political fights over federal education policy serve as an example of what Kurzweil refers to as “systemic risks” to the structure of federal-state-local interaction that he hypothesizes. Is the “structure” no more than a temporary political alignment at the federal and state levels? Is any effort to coordinate independently empowered political actors – whether Congress and the President, or states and the federal government – inherently unstable? Or, thinking back to our first sessions this semester on the politics of evolutionary learning, is there a politics that can sustain this type of governance?

Session #26 April 16 2014
CMSD and GSCF will present on April 16th.

Note Date Change: NYCDOE and TX will present on April 30th.

Cleveland Metropolitan School District Team

Readings:
2. Mark Ehlert, Cory Koedel, Eric Parsons, and Michael Podgursky, Choosing the Right Growth Measure, Education Next (Spring 2014).
5. U.S. DOE, Use of Education Data at the Local Level (2010), pgs. ix-xx.

Discussion Questions:

1. Given the framework and guiding principles listed in the School Guide to the School Quality Review, should the Quality Review be incorporated into the framework or used as a separate evaluation tool? What are the tradeoffs involved? In designing a Quality Review, is experimentalism an effective governance model?

2. Do you agree with Ehler’s conclusion that the two-step approach is the preferred growth measure for quantifying student progress? Does it bother you that it may conceal differences in absolute performance across schools in different contexts?
3. What lessons can we draw from the Bloomberg-era letter-grade system (in terms of both the effectiveness of the grading system and the public response) when we consider designing Balanced Scorecards for other districts?

4. Should districts allow schools to choose their own support system? Consider the factors that go towards whether autonomy to self-select a support system should be a reward for high student performance or a privilege enjoyed by all schools.

5. The U.S. DOE Report provides a list of recommendations for Schools, Districts, and State and National Policy (pgs. xix-xx). What governance model do you most associate with these recommendations? Are they focused on school procedures, substantive decisions, or both? Do you agree with these recommendations?

6. Does the DCPS School Scorecard strike the proper balance between transparency/thoroughness and accessibility/user-friendliness? What changes would you make to the scorecard?

**Great Schools Connecticut Team:**
Our client, Great Schools Connecticut (GSCT), employs a portfolio management strategy similar to the one employed by Robin Hood described in the reading. We will discuss our client’s portfolio management strategy in relation to experimentalism. Please read the passage from Robin Hood’s Book *Measuring Success, How Robin Hood Estimates the Impact of Grants* pp. 16-39 and consider the questions related to portfolio management below.

1. In what ways does Robin Hood and GSCT’s portfolio management strategy model fall short of pure experimentalism? For example, could a portfolio manager adopt practices from the Traxton or INPO readings?

2. Great Schools Connecticut is an organization that directs the operations of its portfolio members with funding, but has little direct authority. Compared to other organizations we have studied this year, are there reasons why this fact might make it more difficult for GSCT to employ a form of experimentalism?

3. Similar to Robin Hood, GSCT will fund a diverse array of organizations, including non-profits, but may also provide funding to public schools and districts. Can the different parties in this “mixed institution” portfolio get-along? How can they effectively interact? What can Great Schools Connecticut do to incentivize them to work together beyond threatening to defund those that do not cooperate? Is an experimentalist approach among the various portfolio members possible or is GSCT better off employing a form of managerialism?

4. Think 5 years down the road. Do you envision GSCT gravitating more towards an experimentalist framework or away from one? What events would trigger an institutional response away from experimentalism? What baseline practices should GSCT put in place now to maintain an experimentalist structure?

**Student Project Presentations:** After providing the class with enough of a description of your project and its broader context to establish or reestablish a common understanding, please do both of the following:
1. Critically consider your project or its broader context from the perspective of experimentalism or, if you would prefer, from the perspective of one or more of the other governance models we've discussed. In what ways (if any) does the project or reform strategy proceed from, or is it grounded in, one or more of the governance model(s) we have discussed in class? How could the project or the broader reform strategy succeed more fully or efficiently if it were modified in some fashion along the lines suggested by one or another or a combination of the governance models? How does the project or the broader reform strategy deviate from the relevant governance model(s), and how do those deviations impede the project's or reform strategy's effectiveness? Overall, what could the leaders of your project or the broader reform strategy learn from your understanding of the theory underlying, and the best means of implementing, the relevant governance model(s)?

2. Critically consider experimentalism, or if you would prefer, one or more of the other governance models we've discussed from the perspective of your project or its broader context. Again, in what way does the project or strategy proceed from, or is it grounded in, one or more of those governance model(s)? What weaknesses, difficulties or challenges does your project or its broader context reveal about the theory of change and improvement that underlies the relevant governance model(s)? What light does the project or broader strategy shed on how easy or hard it is to implement the relevant governance model(s) effectively? How might those challenges lead you to modify the relevant governance model(s)? What do the challenges lead you to conclude about which model(s) would best facilitate the relevant reform strategy -- or about the validity and usefulness of one or more, or all, of the governance models in general? Overall, what could the proponents of the relevant governance model(s) learn from your project or its context?

**Session #27: April 23, 2014**
**Panel: Summing Up; Looking Forward: A Conversation with Joel Klein**

**Reading:**

Session #28: April 30, 2014:
Student Projects Presentations, Day 2

DOE and Texas teams will present today. See Session #26 for information on presentation components.

Texas Team
Readings:
1. Wohlstetter and Sebring, "School-based Management in the United States" (skim 161-166, read pages 166 through 176)
2. Dillon, "The Road to Autonomy: Can Schools, Districts, and Central Offices Find Their Way?" (pp 1-5, skim the rest)
3. The Nation's Report Card: Mega States (pp 11, 13, 17-19)
4. Guidance For Implementing the Innovation Schools Act (Colorado Dept. of Education) (pp. 3-10.)

Questions:
1) Why might districts or states want to give schools more autonomy? What might some of the pitfalls of increased school autonomy be? What other structures/regimes must be in place for increased autonomy to improve student outcomes in all schools?
2) How a governance structure that emphasizes school autonomy transform the role of key stakeholders in the school system, e.g. central office, principals, teachers, and parents? Consider the governance structure from the point of view of a teacher in an autonomous school, what are the possibilities for growth for a particular teacher, and under what circumstances are these growth opportunities more likely to occur?
3) Consider Colorado's application process for innovation status. What are some of the pros and cons of the application process? What elements of the various governance models (Experimentalism, Bureaucracy, Managerialism, etc.)

DOE Team
Readings:
1. CPRL Team, School Culture Case Studies Report [Draft]: Read introduction and conclusion, and choose one case study to read (either Arts & Letters, GNSS, or BASE).
2. Office of Postsecondary Readiness, NYC Department of Education, Academic and Personal Behaviors Framework
3. (Optional): Re-read / review NYC DOE white paper What’s Next for School Accountability in New York City (assigned as reading for our Fall presentation)

Discussion Questions:
1. What is the theory of action underlying the OPSR framework for promoting academic and personal behaviors (APB) in schools?
2. What do you think of the OPSR framework as a resource for schools? What are the benefits/challenges schools might face in using this framework to develop
systems and/or school-wide strategies that support APB? What revisions might you make to the framework?

3. How do you think the School Culture Case Studies Report might fit into NYC DOE’s “next steps” for accountability? What do you see as the connection between the differentiated accountability pilot and the School Culture Case Studies Report?

4. Assume the perspective of different stakeholders (principal, teacher, student, parent, teacher, NYC DOE): what would be your reaction to the School Culture Case Studies Report? What would be your main concerns and questions with using APB as an accountability measure?