EDA 7670 Economic Issues in Education

Division: Administrative and Organizational Studies
Program Area: Educational Leadership
Course Number: ED 7670
Course Title: Economic Issues in Education
CRN: 24667
Term/Year: Winter 2014
Course Location: 629 Oakland Center
Day and Time: Wednesday 5:00 – 8:40 pm
Credit: 4 credits

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**Purpose**

If American public education is to obtain and efficiently utilize the resources necessary to meet the expectations of its varied publics, administrative practitioners -- and other supporters of public education including academicians, researchers, policy makers, and lay citizens -- must provide leadership in the debate over the efficient operation of our education enterprise. To provide this leadership, they must possess a basic understanding of education as an economic investment involving the use of a substantial amount of scarce resources. This course is designed to help provide this knowledge and apply it to the policymaking process.

**Course Overview**

This is a graduate course in the economics of education. It is organized into three parts.

Part I concerns education as an economic investment and the role of government in that investment. In the U.S. and elsewhere, many issues in education policy address economic concerns, including low worker productivity and sluggish economic growth, increasing economic inequality, and rising poverty. Our substantial public and private expenditures on education are generally viewed as an investment that will lead to higher productivity and growth, reduced economic inequality, and less poverty. This part will examine the economic rationale for investment in education and the economic effects of that investment.

Part II covers cost analysis and the economic evaluation of educational policies and programs. As education faces increasing pressures of competition for public dollars, a cyclical economy, and ever-increasing educational demands, educators must find a way to choose among competing alternative uses of its limited resources. Standard education evaluation techniques generally take account only of the effects of alternative programs, such as the number of students served, the impact on test scores, and so on. Cost-effectiveness analysis, on the other hand, takes account of both the costs and effects of alternatives, making it possible to choose those alternatives that provide the best results for any given resource outlay or that minimize the resource utilization for any given outcome. This part introduces the methodologies of cost-effectiveness analysis and reviews important applications in education. Particular emphasis will be placed on the evaluation of education programs for children living in poverty.

Part III concerns economic analysis of the production of education programs. Topics to be covered include the production of education, the market for teachers, educational choice in its various forms (e.g., vouchers, tuition tax credits, charter schools) and the use of incentives for educational improvement.

There is no economics prerequisite for this course. Those aspects of basic microeconomic theory needed to understand economic issues important to education will be discussed in class.
**Course Objectives**

1. Understand the theory and research findings regarding the relationship between education, productivity, economic inequality, and poverty.

2. Acquire basic competence in cost analysis, understand the common applications of cost-effectiveness analysis to policymaking and evaluation in education, and be critical readers of educational policy literature.

3. Understand and use basic economic concepts and techniques in education policy analysis.

4. Understand the fiscal and behavioral effects of intergovernmental grant programs.

5. Examine the economic and fiscal implications of educational choice.

**Textbooks:**


Course Pack:


Course Requirement: Critiques of Journal Articles
Two written critiques are required. The first is due by **January 29** and the second by **February 26**. Each critique should be 3-5 pages (600-1,000 words), double-spaced and typewritten, and never more than 5 pages. Any article in the coursepack may be the subject of your critique.

The critique should be organized into two parts:

1. A brief summary of the main points or arguments the author is making or trying to make (1-2 pages);

2. Your criticisms and comments on the positive and/or negative aspects of the article (2-3 pages).

To assist in writing each critique, you might consider the following questions:

- Have I adequately and accurately summarized the main points -- and done it in no more than two pages?

- Was the article well-organized? Was the author’s argument or theses well-developed and supported with evidence?

- Have I supported my criticisms and comments with evidence, statements, or illustration drawn from my reading or personal experience?

Your writing will be judged both for its substance and for its clarity and style. Your writing should not only say something, it should say it well -- in clear, concise English. I will read, evaluate, and provide feedback on the critiques. In evaluating writing assignments, I will consider the following criteria:

- How engaged is the writer with the topic? How strongly does the writer engage the reader?

- Is the critique well-focused? Does it have a clear beginning, middle, and end? Is it well-organized and well-developed through examples that support the points or arguments being made?

- Is the paper sound grammatically? Is language used with fluency and variety?

- Does the paper’s content reflect deep understanding of the subject?

**Course Requirement: Cost-Effectiveness Study**
Each student will write a short research paper, not to exceed 12 pages double-spaced, including tables, addressing the cost-effectiveness of educational programs and services for low-income children. Ideally, your paper will examine programs and services being provided to children in the school or district in which you work. This paper will be worth 35 percent of your grade and is due April 9. Additional information about this paper assignment will be handed out in class.

**Course Requirement: Take-home final exam or in class presentation**

A comprehensive, written take-home final examination will be distributed during class on April 2. The exam will generally be essay type and may include a question asking you to analyze or interpret a set of data. Your completed exam is due no later than Friday, April 18. You may, of course, turn in your exam on April 16, our last class meeting. Depending upon student interest, participation in a panel presentation to the class may be substituted for the take-home final. Additional information regarding these presentations will be distributed in class.

**Grading**

Each critique will be worth 20% of your course grade. The cost-effectiveness paper will be worth 35% and the final exam 25%. Class participation will also be considered.
Course Outline and Readings

I. Investment in Education and Public Policy

   Addonizio and Kearney, chapter 1, “Introduction”
   Hanushek, “Alternative School Policies…” (3)

II. Cost Analysis and Economic Evaluation of Education

   A. Cost analysis and policymaking in education

      Levin and McEwan, Cost-Effectiveness Analysis, pp. 1-216.

   B. Cost-effectiveness evaluation of education programs

      Barnett, “Benefits of Compensatory Preschool…” (#1)
      King, “Meeting the Educational Needs…” (#5)
      Mosteller, “The Tennessee Study of Class Size…” (#9)
      Belfield, et. al., “The High/Scope Perry Preschool Program (#2)

III. Economic Efficiency in Education Production

   A. Teacher evaluation and teacher labor markets

      Addonizio and Kearney, chapter 3, “Holding Schools Accountable”
      Addonizio and Kearney, chapter 4, “Assessing the Academic Outcomes of Schooling”
      Addonizio and Kearney, chapter 7, “The Detroit Public Schools: A Failure of Policy and Politics”
      Harris, “Would Accountability Based on Teacher Value Added…” (#4)
      Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff, “Teacher Sorting…” (#7)

   B. Incentives, choice and educational achievement

      Levin and Belfield, “Educational Interventions…” (#8)
      Addonizio and Kearney, chapter 5,”Charter Schools”
      Addonizio and Kearney, chapter 6, “Schools of Choice”
      Addonizio and Kearney, chapter 8, “Reflections on the Limits of Policy”
Attention Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.

Please be aware that a delay in getting SDS accommodation letters for the current semester may hinder the availability or facilitation of those accommodations in a timely manner. Therefore, it is in your best interest to get your accommodation letters as early in the semester as possible.

Academic Dishonesty
No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. You are in this class to learn, and you must commit the effort to obtaining your own knowledge and skills. You should already be aware, but for specific examples of academic dishonesty, including what constitutes plagiarism, you should read the Undergraduate and Undergraduate Bulletins found at http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu/, The Student Due Process Policy at http://students.slis.wayne.edu/policies/index.php and any other formal documents that are created for students at WSU found through www.wayne.edu. You will be asked to sign a "denial of academic dishonesty/pledge of authenticity" statement and attach it to each product turned in for credit in this class. Any academic dishonesty will clearly be considered premeditated and not accidental. Expulsion is probably not worth the few hours of work you will avoid by cheating, so please think carefully and thoroughly, ask for help when needed, and make smart decisions.

Plagiarism is defined as the theft and use of another’s ideas or writings as one’s own. (The American Heritage Desk Dictionary, 1981). It is a serious offense, particularly in a university setting where the exchange of ideas is central to everyone’s mission. Here at Wayne State, a faculty member may invoke any or all of the following sanctions when plagiarism has been found:

1. Fail the student on the plagiarized assignment;
2. Fail the student in the course;
3. File charges against the student.
WSU Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism includes copying material (more than 5 consecutive words) from outside texts or presenting outside information as if it were your own or by not crediting authors through citations. (APA cites require author, year, and page number for direct quotes in quotation marks and for paraphrases with no quotation marks.) It can be deliberate or unintended. If in doubt about the use of a source, cite it. University policy states that students can be subject to multiple sanctions, from reprimand to expulsion as a consequence of academic dishonesty. Students caught plagiarizing information from other sources will receive a failing grade in the course. To enforce this policy, all outside references must be submitted with assignments. [Check out web resources related to plagiarism to learn more. For instance a good plagiarism definition can be found at: http://www.suite101.com/content/a-definition-for-plagiarism-a10232; and paraphrasing examples good and bad at http://library.csusm.edu/plagiarism/howtoavoid/how_avoid_paraphrase.htm.

Please read carefully the attached paper “Plagiarism: What it is and How to Recognize and Avoid it.” If you have any questions about this topic, you may raise them in class or privately with me.

Religious Observance Policy
Because of the extraordinary variety of religious affiliations represented in the University student body and staff, the Wayne State University calendar makes no provisions for religious holidays. It is University policy, however, to respect the faith and religious obligations of the individual students who find that their classes or examinations involve conflicts with their religious observances. They are expected to notify their instructors well in advance so that alternative arrangements as suitable as possible may be worked out.

Student Disability Services
If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.

Withdrawal Deadline
Withdrawal Policy: Students who withdraw from a course after the end of the 4th week of class will receive a grade of WP, WF, or WN.

- WP will be awarded if the student is passing the course (based on work due to date) at the time the withdrawal is requested
- WF will be awarded if the student is failing the course (based on work due to date) at the time the withdrawal is requested
- WN will be awarded if no materials have been submitted, and so there is no basis for a grade
Students must submit their withdrawal request on-line through Pipeline. The faculty member must approve the withdrawal request before it becomes final, and students should continue to attend class until they receive notification via email that withdrawal has been approved. Withdrawals can be requested at any point from the first week of class through the end of the 10th week of classes.

Students are sent two communications each semester regarding course withdrawals and deadlines for withdrawing. The medical withdrawal process can be initiated for up to three months following the end of a term, and is not impacted by this change in withdrawal deadline. Exceptions for other reasons would be considered only when circumstances beyond a student’s control affect ability to complete course requirements, and occur after the end of the withdrawal period and prior to the beginning of the final examination period. In no case will a late withdrawal be approved after a student has taken the final exam, or received a final grade in the class. *The appropriate remedy for a poor grade is normally to repeat the course.* If questions exist about exceptions for course withdrawal after the deadline, please consult with the Office of the Registrar prior to advising a student to seek an exception.