

MODULE

4

Evaluative Criteria and Policy Alternatives

"Oh I forgot this module was empty"

-Miron Liu, during SLD week

Introduction

As a result of many obstacles in the political sphere, it can often be difficult to pass policies. A multitude of reasons such as morals, values, beliefs, economics, and more can inhibit a policy from appealing to enough politicians to make it all the way through the process of becoming a law. Because of this, policy alternatives should be created. These are different approaches to solve the problem that was being addressed with the initial policy. Module 4 will also give students a perspective on the issues they are attempting to resolve with their policies by introducing them to evaluative criteria. They will be able to use this criteria to determine goals for their policies, given that they will have an understanding of how goals are met with policies.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand the importance of evaluative criteria for a policy.
2. Students will be able to determine evaluative criteria for their projects.
3. Students will understand why alternatives are needed, and be able to examine tradeoffs between different alternatives.
4. Students will be able to formulate alternative solutions using instruments of policy.

Agenda

1. Passion pitches (10 min)
2. Defining evaluative criteria (10 min)
3. Defining policy alternatives (10 min)
 - a. Review Instruments of Policy (5)
4. Practicing policy alternatives

Activities

Are You "Shirt" There's No Alternatives? (10 min)

Purpose:

To introduce students to the relevance and necessity of policy alternatives in an entertaining matter.

Materials:

Single small sheet of double walled cardboard, a stapler, a baggy shirt, note card

Directions:

Facilitator A and Facilitator B will wait for all students to arrive in the room. Pretending like they are still waiting for full attendance, the two will strike up a conversation, with Facilitator A bringing up the point "could you bring a note to so-and-so tonight for me?", and Facilitator B obliging. Wearing a baggy shirt with a piece of double walled cardboard under it, Facilitator B will take the note and a stapler, and promptly staple the note into their chest. To the three students that are likely paying attention, it will look as if the Facilitator B performed an overly complicated, and painful, alternative to putting the note into their pocket and remembering to give it away. If nobody notices, or gives a reaction, Facilitator A should react how any normal person would react to someone stapling a note card into their chest, which should get attention. The two facilitators will then turn to the class and start a discussion.

Discussion:

1. Were there more effective ways to remember the note and keep it on hand?
2. Do you think the same goal would have been accomplished by having the facilitator put the note in their pocket?
3. What makes the class's alternative from question 1 better than what Facilitator B did?

After the discussion, both facilitators will give a brief definition of what policy alternatives are.

Evaluation (20 min)

Purpose:

To facilitate the next step of the policy cycle: evaluation.

Materials:

N/A

Directions:

Introduce the concept of evaluation after a policy is implemented. In groups, have students choose a policy (NCLB, etc.) and have them find 5-7 goals the policy intended (evaluative criteria). Next, have them find public opinion on the policy's implementation and compare the effectiveness to the goals they had identified. Discuss the usefulness of evaluative criteria and the importance of evaluation.

Discussion:

1. What needs to be considered when evaluating a policy?
 - a. Costs, benefits, and efficiency
 - b. Equity
 - c. Ethics and political values
2. How can the effectiveness of a policy be improved?

Possible things to discuss

NCLB

PPACA

PATRIOT Act

Cigarette Taxation

Alcohol Age

Minimum Wage

Instruments Review (10 min)

Purpose:

To refresh students' recollections of instruments of policy, as the creation of new alternatives sometimes involves using a different instrument.

Materials:

N/A

Directions:

Walk up to the board and write down the instruments of policy. Ask students to explain each.

Instruments: Regulation, government management, taxing and spending, market mechanisms; education, information, and persuasion (These three are one thing)

Discussion:

1. What do you think happens when a policy fails?
 - a. Why do you think alternatives are needed?
2. How can instruments of policy relate to policy alternatives?

Just in "Case" the Policy Fails... (30 min)

Purpose:

To have students understand the importance of policy alternatives in policy making through examining case studies.

Materials:

Policy Failures PowerPoint

(https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xWrnOGZAYSVWdi_N1xXaPTgFLaetgrvTc-QUEEHDuA/edit#slide=id.g2f11386356_0_89)

Directions:

Facilitators will put on a PowerPoint about case studies focusing on different policies that failed.

Discussion:

1. What would you have done differently?
 - a. In turn, what alternatives should have been made in each situation?
2. How can the feasibility of certain alternatives change due to outside circumstances?
3. How would you determine which policy instrument is more effective or appropriate in given situation?

Do You "Poli-See" a Problem? (30 min)

Purpose:

Have students apply the concept of policy alternatives to not only their own projects, but the projects of their peers.

Materials:

N/A

Directions:

Rotate groups and have each point out problems with their policies. Have students write down a bare bones outline of their policy based on the policy cycle and then go around in their groups (each with a different expo marker color) and edit the policies of others. At the end, have the students write down the critiques and discuss them.

Discussion:

1. What were common problems or holes in the policies of your peers?
2. Were there any problems that you didn't think of before when making your policy?

Sources

1. (https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xWrnOGZAYSVWdi_N1xXaPTgFLaetgrvTc-QUEEHduA/edit#slide=id.g2f11386356_0_89)\
 - a. "Six Major US Foreign Policy Failures of the Post-Cold War Era | Global Research - Centre for Research on Globalization." *Global Research - Centre for Research on Globalization*, 15 Sept. 2017, www.globalresearch.ca/six-major-us-foreign-policy-failures-of-the-post-cold-war-era/5609163