

EDUCATIONAL POLICY AS A MATTER FOR ANTHROPOLOGISTS' SCHOLARLY and APPLIED ENGAGEMENT

American Anthropological Association (AAA)
Council on Anthropology and Education

ad hoc committee on active engagement in public discourse and
policy creation, interpretation, and implementation

position paper DRAFT

submitted to the Board of AAA's
Council on Anthropology and Education (CAE) by:

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This ad hoc committee thanks the governing board of the American Anthropological Association's Council on Anthropology of Education for the opportunity to collaborate in the creation of this draft position paper. We submit it to the board with the anticipation that the board will suggest to the ad hoc committee and/or to the membership more generally next steps to further this work.

CONTEXT

In the 21st Century, ‘policy’ has become an immensely powerful almost magical word. This is especially so in English-speaking countries, and even some European countries which, though previously lacking a concept of ‘policy’, are beginning to use the English word to convey attempts to imagine and manage society in new ways through particular constellations of discourses, political technologies and forms of power. ‘Policy’ is used, fairly or not, to give authority and legitimacy to the decisions made by various actors who can shape the futures of children and adult learners -- governments, corporations, and advocacy organizations (among others). ‘Policy’ is also at times a word used to describe decisions by more local decision makers as they engage in routine, daily practice.

For our purposes then, ‘policy’ has two partially overlapping definitions: It refers to formal strategic decision making processes engaged in by the powerful and it also refers to the more quotidian practice of problem definition and strategy making (explicit or tacit, viable or not) for a problem’s resolution. Because of this first definition, to some the study of policy, including educational policy, has come to seem the specialized province of political scientists and economists, or of people with ‘policy training’ (as the proliferation of graduate schools of government and public policy demonstrate). Yet anthropological vantage points, research skills, and content knowledge position us to be particularly thoughtful analysts of the formation, interpretation, and implementation of both kinds of educational policy and to highlight the overlap between the two. Anthropologists recognize that, through policy, individuals and communities are categorized and assigned particular statuses and roles in different social, political, and power contexts.

What is new, however, is making this examination explicitly about policymaking, demystifying its magical or remote qualities, highlighting how it works (variously creating, impeding, and denying opportunities), and insisting on an anthropological role in the state, regional, and national discourses that so powerfully shape the opportunity horizons and cosmologies of children, adolescents, educators, and other learners.

“The study of policy, therefore, leads straight into issues at the heart of anthropology: norms and institutions; ideology and consciousness; knowledge and power; rhetoric and discourse; meaning and interpretations; the global and the local — to mention but a few” (Shore and Wright 1997: 4). Anthropologists can analyze both formal policy, such as is studied by public policy programs and less formal policy, like a teacher’s strategy regarding how to work with migrant children in a heterogeneous classroom. We are especially well positioned to look at policy-making and policy reception, because we study the everyday production of texts, the everyday creation of meanings, and everyday struggles over defining, analyzing, and controlling the experiences of children in schools and of students in colleges and universities. Remembering Levinson and Holland’s (1996) point that every culture and society has created some means to create ‘educated’ persons and to distinguish such persons from other members of society, a new emphasis on formation and implementation of educational policy is not necessarily a departure from longstanding disciplinary practice of examining educational practices. What is new, however, is making this examination explicitly about policymaking, demystifying its magical or remote qualities,

highlighting how it works (variously creating, impeding, and denying opportunities), and insisting on an anthropological role in the state, regional, and national discourses that so powerfully shape the opportunity horizons and cosmologies of children, adolescents, educators, and other learners.

As Shore and Wright (1997) pointed out when proposing an ‘anthropology of policy’, to take policy as an object of study is also to take a critical perspective on systems of governance. Anthropologists engaged in policy studies and organizational analysis have long been aware of the danger of framing research in terms of the definition of problems put forward by powerful decision makers (Wright 1994). The challenge is to avoid studying ‘down’ (Nader 1969)—studying the governed, the objects of policy—in the terms of the governors and then passing the resulting knowledge back ‘up’ the social hierarchy. That, despite best intentions to the contrary, may help governors consolidate their power, but not necessarily enhance the conditions of the governed. By including decision makers as well as the governed within the field of study, a focus on policy makes possible a ‘holistic’, critical approach, which includes the ways policy problems

By including decision makers as well as the governed within the field of study, a focus on policy makes possible a ‘holistic’, critical approach, which includes the ways policy problems emerge and become defined, the ways key words convey decision makers’ images of the society and the subjects they are trying to shape, and how they try to achieve this through administrative procedures or political technologies, which can be analyzed to reveal new forms of governance and power.

emerge and become defined, the ways key words convey decision makers’ images of the society and the subjects they are trying to shape, and how they try to achieve this through administrative procedures or political technologies, which can be analyzed to reveal new forms of governance and power. This is not, however, to suggest that policy, as defined by the governors, automatically dominates the field, or simply

follows a linear path, ‘trickling down’ from on high, through intermediate institutions, to the governed ‘on the ground’. The field is populated by a range of other actors, who, although they do not have equal power, can negotiate, contest, or resist initiatives from above, just as they themselves can initiate change and be actively involved in shaping their own institutions and practices. Often the decision makers, professionals, and other actors, including the governed, embedded in this field are themselves unable to analyze how their procedures and practices contribute to emerging forms of governance, to which they might even be opposed. An ‘anthropology of policy’ thus can provide critical perspectives and space for reflection from which policy makers can also often benefit.

The prospective value of our perspectives does not mean, however, that in the main anthropologists have been effective shapers or critics of the first kind of education policy (i.e., decisionmaking by the powerful). Nor have we succeeded at drawing public attention to how the second form of educational policy (i.e., the daily problem diagnosing, strategy developing, and decisionmaking engaged in by “street-level” educators [Lipsky 1980]) so often does the work of the first kind of policy. Thus, the value of our multifaceted, holistic approach to the study of policy and policy processes in education has not come to be seen as valuable in understanding

and making policy, by either those in the halls of power or those on the “street-level.” That we have much to say does not mean that we are much heard. Some recent explorations into this topic bear out the claim that anthropologists have not yet been particularly influential in shaping ‘policy decisions’ about children’s welfare.

In “Influence: A Study of the Factors Shaping Education Policy,” Swanson and Barlage (2006) surveyed leading U.S. education policy experts to identify and rate the most highly influential research studies, organizations, information sources, and people utilized by policymakers. The most influential studies identified were the body of work published by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), followed by conventional national reports such as the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) report, the National Reading Panel’s 2000 report *Teaching Children to Read*, the American Diploma Project’s *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*, and the Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio Experiment (Project STAR) report. The most influential organizations identified were the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Education, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Education Trust, the National Governor’s Association, and large teachers’ unions. The most influential information sources were NAEP, the National Center for Education Statistics at USED, *Education Week*, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, and the Education Trust. *Education Next*, published by Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, was the only peer-reviewed periodical ranked among the top information sources. The most influential people identified were elected officials, representatives of government agencies, and leaders of philanthropies and nonprofit organizations. Although several nominees in this category had distinguished backgrounds in academia, only one served as a full-time academic, and she had played a major role in a national institution engaged in policymaking discourse (in addition to her university faculty duties).

The issue, however, is more complicated than just a complaint that others are not listening. Valenzuela et al. (2007) described how when *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* published a call for papers for a special issue on the impact of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policies on schools and minority youth, to the surprise of the editorial board there was a very small number of papers submitted. They wondered why there seemed to be such a paucity of ethnographies on the implementation and implications of this most-important of education policies. They asked: “Do districts and schools fear being exposed by researchers as they work under pressure to make improvements? Is a lack of funding for long-term qualitative research the culprit? Are ethnographers largely disconnected from policy discourses surrounding NCLB? Or is qualitative research on the effects of NCLB unusually mismatched to the timing of policy needs?” (2007: 2). These issues of access, resources, disconnection, and timing mismatches each deserve more careful scrutiny in order to better understand and address the reasons why anthropologists of education are not more integral in the study of NCLB (and efforts to critique it, improve it, etc.), as the policy itself is hailed as a ‘research-based’ approach to educational improvement.

This potent example from U.S. policy creation and implementation raises another question: *About whom, to whom, and about what places, institutions, and countries* are the members of the Council on Anthropology and Education of the American Anthropological Association ready to assert the importance of an anthropology of educational policy? For example, as Mexican teacher educators struggle to adapt their ‘*asignatura regional*’ (regional curriculum) to better

prepare teachers to work with particular struggling student groups, they could gain from ethnographically-derived guidance that warns of the easy ways deficit understandings get built into teacher professional development. Can/should/will CAE members provide such guidance? Or, as Dutch legislators consider changing a funding formula that has directed extra resources to schools with high migrant enrollments, can/should/will CAE anthropologists offer on-the-ground depictions of what schooling in these sites is like and what a reduction in funding and staffing might precipitate? Are we willing to engage with practitioners and policymakers outside of the academy to an extent and in ways not yet common for us?

CAE needs to develop strategies to synthesize and project our expertise, to coordinate the dissemination of groundbreaking findings, to integrate ourselves into existing policy conversations, and even to direct the production of necessary research so that anthropologists have a consequential, rather than muted and erratic, impact on national and more local educational decisions.

Practitioners in many parts of the world and at all levels of the educational system, from the classroom to federal officials, have adopted the posture that program and policy implementation should be *evidence-based* and *research-proven*. But more evidence is needed than calculations of test scores and econometric modeling. Evidence is needed of people's complex *experiences* of policy. A

democratic polity, including its leaders, needs to know *how and why* policies are created, implemented, and contested, and how policies' effects on children and adults take shape. They (we?) need to know how policy interventions are experienced and reshaped by educators, parents, and students; how contexts and relationships shift to fit a policy mandate; and how policy mandates morph to fit community politics and relationships. In short, practitioners at all levels of the educational system, as well as those who form 'governance by the people', need to know the kinds of things that CAE members are expert at studying, writing, and speaking about. In turn, CAE needs to develop strategies to synthesize and project our expertise, to coordinate the dissemination of groundbreaking findings, to integrate ourselves into existing policy conversations, and even to direct the production of necessary research so that anthropologists have a consequential, rather than muted and erratic, impact on national and more local educational decisions.

Yet engaging or partnering with decision-making elites to inform better decisionmaking brings its own sets of dilemmas, ethical and methodological among others. To end this introduction, we want to forefront two dilemmas that our ad hoc committee broached without consensually answering:

- 1. Do we want to be independent from policymakers with a preserved right to be critical, or do we want to be welcome into the halls of power with a chance at more influence but also with the burden of compromises made at entry?**

The first dilemma has to do with our relation to 'power'. It seems to us that CAE can take either of two postures that each come with advantages and drawbacks. CAE could focus on studying the governed to give information to the governing with the thought that this will enable the latter to improve policy. This would be a strategy for the input that

many feel we currently lack. Alternatively, CAE could favor a more critical approach in which the governors would be as much a subject of study as the governed (with this posture not assuming that systems of government are automatically benign). This second option seems more consistent with Laura Nader's (1969) old call to 'study up,' as well as with the critical and democratic perspectives that our colleagues are becoming stronger at articulating. Of course, in a multi-member organization some members can work from one posture and others from another, but such heterogeneity argues against CAE as an entity trying to define an identity as an inside partner or external critic.

2. How nationally vs. internationally can we and should we speak and address our efforts?

The second dilemma relates to purview. To what extent is CAE seems ready and capable of advocating forms of policy engagement as a global or international task, versus one that most of the membership is better suited to engage in within the United States? The preceding introduction and the text that follows mainly (although not exclusively) use U.S. examples for purposes of suggestion/illustration. That may be a benefit (highlighting what we could bring to U.S. policy discourse), but it also reflects that most of this report's authors were less sure about how to use non-U.S. examples and were aware that an American association's advocacy beyond U.S. borders could be seen as imperious (fairly or not). It is an open question to readers to consider how and how much we should engage the anthropology of educational policy beyond U.S. borders. We know our discipline can engage beyond borders, but we are less sure of how.

THIS COMMITTEE'S CHARGE

CAEers have expressed a desire to contribute more vigorously and effectively to both the growth of knowledge about education policy and to public discourse and practice regarding education policy decisions. This reflects the following, overarching AAA organizational goals: “To disseminate anthropological knowledge and its use to address human problems; To promote the entire field of anthropology in all its diversity; To represent the discipline nationally and internationally, in the public and private sectors.”

We, the members of the ad hoc committee that drafted this report, were charged by CAE to formulate a draft position paper to address AAA’s charge as well as concerns related to policy that many of us have encountered in our scholarship and praxis. The following Goals and attendant Actions are submitted as suggestions for consideration by CAE leaders and members. These goals and actions reflect an understanding of our charge that broadened as we worked on this report. The issue is not just CAE’s prospective relationship to *policy*, but rather what might CAE’s engagement and input in public sphere discourses about education look like? What are our opportunities and responsibilities, given what we know about students, parents, teachers, and other educational stakeholders? In this spirit, we expect that our goals and actions may well overlap with the work of both CAE’s ad hoc committee on governance and its Task Force 2007.

GOAL 1: ENHANCE THE PLACE OF EDUCATION POLICY STUDIES WITHIN THE CAE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In the current structure of CAE (i.e., the 12 committees and their topic areas) there is no one place for the communal, focused exploration of education policy topics, processes, or problems (for either of the overlapping definitions of policy described in the opening paragraph of this report). We contend that this inhibits our section’s ability to contribute to building anthropological knowledge, theory, and critique in the area of policy.

ACTION 1: We argue for policy becoming a formal focus of CAE, with the creation of either a cross-organizational Forum on Policy, or simply a new CAE committee, although the Forum would be preferable to another committee.

A cross-organizational *Forum on Policy* would be a new entity within the existing CAE committee structure and would allow for the exchange of ideas both across and within existing committees. This Forum would be led by three elected or board appointed members, who would also lead the Media Communications Coordination Team (see Action 2 within Goal 2). This Forum would be further constituted with formal representation from each existing CAE committee, and informal representation from any additional CAE member who wishes to participate. Official representatives in the Forum would be expected to function as cross pollinators, gathering information from and sharing information with their regular committees about important policy topics that need study. They would highlight timely public debates about policy issues that CAE and its members should consider engaging in and would point out opportunities for collaboration, and other types of information sharing and strategizing. The Forum could consciously enlist CAE members who have policymaking as well as scholarly roles (e.g., a student member who is also a school principal or a member who works for IES, Wenner-Gren, or a similar entity) and could be a vehicle for recruiting to CAE those with policy

generating or policy intermediary roles (i.e., individuals in local school systems, community organizations, governing bodies, etc.). The Forum could be a vehicle for creating ongoing communication links with education policy shapers, be they political leaders, media leaders, or ‘experts’ from well-known organizations who work on policy issues (e.g., Education Trust,

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Council of Chief State School Officers, National Association of School Boards, etc.).

Forum members could also be liaisons to the AAA Committee on Public Policy and to the new AAA Interest Group on the Anthropology of Public Policy (IGAPP) that was established two years ago and now has about 800 members. Highlighting the dilemmas of part-

nering with policy makers and engaging primarily with U.S. policy makers, the Committee on Public Policy is a vehicle for AAA to identify anthropologists with expertise in: (1) social and cultural aspects of health, (2) culture and diversity in education, (3) an interdisciplinary approach to the environment, (4) economic, social, and cultural aspects of the information revolution, and (5) globalization and its impact on policy (see <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ppc/brief.htm>).

In contrast, IGAPP is organized by Greg Feldman and Janine Wedel, and comes very much out of the ‘anthropology of policy’ approach, with Cris Shore and Sue Wright (cited earlier) also as founding members. One strategy that might overcome some of the organizational and structural problems set out below would be to establish a joint group or forum between CAE and IGAPP. This would have to be explored carefully, because IGAPP takes a critical approach to policy and does not have changing actual policies as its prime aim, but it might be worth seeing if there is common ground that could benefit both parties.

While attending to or reaching out to those with policymaking power might enrich our scholarship and get our ideas considered in consequential ways, this first action step of creating a Forum on Policy could just as easily and just as importantly become a vehicle for direct access to the public, to practitioners, and to other policy consumers. We want to reach practitioners who work with 125 students a day just as much as we want to reach a state commissioner of education who only infrequently works directly with children. The point is that we have to communicate our findings better to THE PUBLIC, rather than leave them murkily circulating among academics only; we also want to study questions of importance to THE PUBLIC.

A second possibility would be to establish a new CAE Committee on Policy as a way of pursuing this action. This would fit more easily within the existing CAE organizational structure of committees. While this is definitely an option, one caution is that a new Committee on Policy might simply further CAE’s atomization (the “silo effect”). This could leave untapped policy study’s potential to spark cross-committee activity and to provide an overarching source of theory. On a related and larger note, the Forum or a committee would need to work against the

atomization of AAA writ large (as education policy is affected by all sorts of other policies in health, housing, etc., so a CAE-only entity would miss that useful policy input from other policy-oriented folks in AAA). One way of avoiding the pitfalls outlined in this paragraph might be joint activities with the Committee on Public Policy and/or with IGAPP (see above).

Either the Forum or a new CAE Committee could be given the opportunity to invite sessions at the annual meetings, and to fulfill other similar roles that existing committees and entities within AAA/CAE fulfill. This first proposed Action would further the organization's intentional focus on policy study and engagement by providing members with a *structure* within which to further dialogue inside CAE and between CAE and the public more generally, about the kinds of questions, theories, methodologies, and critiques that CAE scholars can address. In that spirit, the following is a list of foundational concepts related to education policy. We do not consider this list as exhaustive but rather as illustrative; we have created it for the purpose of furthering dialogue on how CAE can advance an anthropology of education policy within and beyond academia.

1. *Policy can be investigated as a process of diagnosing “problems” and designing “solutions.”* Policy labels create social facts and understandings (e.g., some students are “ELLs” and as such are recipients of particular instructional strategies and context and not others; from Sutton (2001): some rural girls need to reduce their fertility and improve their health and development agencies’ introduction of schooling should yield both these ends).
2. *Education policy can be thought of narrowly or expansively*, with an expansive definition including topics like labor policy, law enforcement, the creation of social programs, and poverty policy. CAE members would likely be interested in studying how various such policies affect the treatment of young people, and particularly those in “educational” settings of all kinds.
3. *An anthropology of education policy is committed to the critical study of policy as enabling or disabling the pursuit of social justice in a democratic society.* Critical questions about the diagnoses, strategies, boundaries, social facts and understandings, and real-world outcomes of education policy can be pursued. For example, who is benefited, or disserved, by particular “policies” and their effects? What is at stake in a given policy formulation? For whom? Why? What is the impact on various populations and subpopulations of particular policy strategies?
4. In the traditional, instrumentalist paradigm of policy studies, the sociopolitical world is understood as clearly dichotomized. Some are marked as exclusively eligible to make policy and others are marked as the recipients, beneficiaries, or implementers of policy (Stein 2004). *An alternative anthropological paradigm of policy studies reduces or dissolves the dichotomies of policy creators versus policy recipients, and even more elementally of policy versus practice. An anthropology of policy opens new critical perspectives on governance and power (Shore and Wright 1997).* In a CAE policy paradigm, the understanding of policy can be democratized. Policy is conceptualized as a practice and ongoing process of normative cultural production, constituted by diverse actors across diverse social and institutional contexts (Levinson and Sutton 2001). Anthropologists studying moments in the policy process can illuminate the place and role of values, beliefs, and identities when institutions, individuals, and groups negotiate

decision-making and everyday practice. The multiple meanings and effects of policies can be illuminated, and basic assumptions of policies can be challenged.

5. *Policy can be studied from many perspectives, including ethnographically*, and different methodological lenses are useful for different insights. Anthropologists of education are well suited to examine with a granular perspective moments of policy creation, appropriation, interpretation, implementation and analysis/critique. Studies of the everyday experience of policymaking, and of policy's effects, can contribute greatly to deep understandings of what policy is and what policy does.

6. *Examining education policy efficacy* requires documenting what the policy was as delivered as well as intended, so that virtues or problems can be identified respectively as issues of design or implementation (Erickson and Gutierrez 2002). Part of this appraisal might also entail an examination of the posited criteria for "efficacy." How did these criteria become the criteria for effectiveness? What are the implications of these criteria, and for whom? Why is the size of English language vocabulary an entry criterion for U.S. gifted and talented programs when many bilingual children know more words than so-called 'gifted' monolinguals (e.g., Valdés 2003)? What might this tell us about cultural, political, social and power assumptions underlying the policy and about the impacts of these assumptions on people?

GOAL 2: GREATER ENGAGEMENT OF SCHOLARS WITH THE MEDIA AND WITH THOSE INVOLVED IN AND/OR AFFECTED BY EDUCATION POLICY MAKING

CAE membership has recognized a relatively low level of active engagement between anthropologists of education and individuals and organizations directly involved in education policymaking as traditionally understood (i.e., federal, state, and local level policymaking bodies, plus the media). Indeed, some anthropology of education is admittedly disconnected (with the exception of when we conduct field research) from improving the lives of those affected by education policies (e.g., students, families, communities). We know that our work has profound value for decision makers and communities, yet our research, publications, and other activities are not reaching or engaging these stakeholders effectively.

ACTIONS 2, 3, 4: CREATE STRATEGIES OF SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT WITH DECISIONMAKERS, THE MEDIA, AND THE PUBLIC WRIT LARGE

Action 2. We recommend that CAE create an organizational structure to address media communication: a standing Media Communications Coordination Team. As a CAE listserv conversation about cultural deficit thinking in a *New York Times Magazine* article recently illustrated, the news cycle clock moves much more quickly than the scholarly clock. In that instance, several CAEers wanted to express their discomfort with the main framing of the article, but the organization at large was unable to craft a powerful letter-to-the-editor within the three or four-day window required to have a chance for the letter being printed. This instance highlighted the lack of a CAE media response strategy, including ambiguity regarding who could "speak" for the section or authorize someone else to. Letters-to-the-editor, of course, are not the only way to

engage with popular print media (op-eds and free-lance articles, and essays in widely read as opposed to scholarly publications are other alternatives), and print media is hardly the only media forum that shapes policy and public sphere thinking. Educational anthropologists also need a strategy for engaging with radio, TV, and the Internet. This can include authorship, film-making, blogging, etc., and it can also include being available as a topic area expert.

It is our conviction that the deliberate and democratic ways that are well-used by CAE for elections, for the new mission statement, etc. are ill-suited for a media strategy that depends on rapid response. What is necessary is a different strategy that honors CAE purposes but that may not necessarily claim to speak *for* the organization (although arguments could be made for authorizing current and previous CAE presidents and perhaps other elected members to speak for the section). A standing **Media Communication Coordination Team** could be established or the three Forum on Policy leaders mentioned in Action 1 could double as the media team. This team, in collaboration with the whole membership (i.e., with anyone interested), would develop and maintain (update) a roster of CAE members who would be willing to comment on various educational topics about which they have expertise. (Lists already created by AAA's Committee on Public Policy might expedite this.) This list would be a resource that the Team could turn to quickly. This list would not be exhaustive, should consciously include new scholars and senior ones, and should reflect the diversity of the organization, the diversity of the nation/geography of the issue at hand, and the diversity of stakeholder groups involved in whatever topic is being addressed by the media at the time. This team could also work with other colleagues involved in the CAE Forum for Policy mentioned as Action 1 above, to continually consider topics and issues for which CAE should have some resources (e.g., position statements) prepared, and to suggest how those who talk with the media represent the topic/issue (for example, common ways in which CAEers talk about race). For this, CAE can work with other AAA sections and with IGAPP as well.

We recommend a three-person Media Communications Coordination Team (three would have a tiebreaker in cases of tough decisions that have to be made on the spot). Members would serve staggered two-year terms and would act as point persons coordinating media inquiries and pursuing opportunities for media engagement, including recruiting additional CAE members to carry out various engagement activities. The positions could be elected or appointed by the Board.

Creating this infrastructure does not preclude any CAE member from engaging with the media on their own initiative. The point of this team is to assure that the section has a regularly functioning media engagement strategy.

Action 3: We recommend that CAE create strategies of engagement with policy processes. We suggest creating **strategies of engagement** with policymakers and decision-makers as traditionally thought of (educational leaders), with educators in schools, and with other school and community members (people most directly affected by education policies). While our suggestions and ideas here most easily apply to the U.S. educational and political context that informs most of us, we can also identify ways that anthropologists of education working and/or studying elsewhere can engage with policymakers and communities as well.

State boards of education, local boards of education, state and federal legislatures, and other leaders typically charged with ‘making policy’ are required in their daily work to process huge amounts of information on a multiplicity of disparate topics, and often on extremely short timelines. They need information based on thorough research, but they often need this information accompanied by strategically synthesized, short presentations of the information. To address this particular need of policymakers, CAE and its members could undertake a number of strategic steps:

1. Individual anthropologists could augment their research products and dissemination efforts to be more ‘policymaker and public sphere friendly’. Things like one-page fact sheets, executive summaries, bullet-point summaries, and brief ‘policy implications’ sections within longer reports are often all policymakers and newspaper readers have time to process. This does not imply that the research should be ‘simplified’ so much as synthesized effectively for their use. Because ethnography is nothing if not rich in context, details, and texture, some anthropologists may be loath to adapt their scholarly production in the ways just suggested. Yet we must pose the questions to ourselves: Are we willing to adapt certain presentations of our work in order for it to be used by people who have different kinds of research needs and assumptions about what is useful (see Demerath, 2003; Walford, 2003)? Do we truly want to be heard outside academia?

2. Engagement might be operationalized through strategically created institutional collaborations. Relationships between individual scholars or universities and state or local boards of education, legislators, and other policymakers could be established. This would assist with not only disseminating our research but also creating collaborative processes by which to set research agendas that are of scholarly interest *and* that are quickly applicable to formal policy processes. Relationships could also be nurtured with the many well-regarded education policy centers and policy-oriented institutions around the country that already make great efforts to provide research resources to their membership and to the public (often via web sites and listservs—e.g., The Education Trust, the Alliance for Excellence in Education, The National Center for Culturally Responsive Education Systems, the Council of Chief State School Officers, The Center for Education Policy). Many CAEers are probably also familiar with popular education practitioner publications (e.g., *Educational Leadership*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Rethinking Schools*, *Language Learner Magazine*) that could be approached about publishing articles we write and adapted for their readership.

Additionally, individual anthropologists or CAE could seek collaborations with institutions already conducting funded research projects. For example, the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences (IES) funds 10 Regional Educational Laboratories to conduct experimental design/random controlled trial studies on promising instructional interventions. Some of these studies look pointedly at student and teacher assessment outcomes, but do not

tend to include thorough explorations of the experiences of students and teachers with the intervention, or of the situational contexts of the activities being investigated (the "how" and the "why"). In studies of this sort, perhaps funding streams that anthropologists have traditionally accessed (e.g., Spencer, Wenner-Gren) could be leveraged to augment or qualify federally supported research. CAEers should also be aware that IES and its predecessor agency, OERI, have previously funded ethnographic and mixed-method research (e.g., Hamann and Lane 2004), so current reluctance on this score is not necessarily permanent reluctance. Another strategy to overcome research-funding limitations is to seek federal funds for action steps (e.g., the teacher training funded under Title III) that can readily embed anthropological research strategies (e.g., chronicling teacher/participant belief systems). The intent then is to press on various fronts to get anthropologists included in analyzing questions of education policy.

*3. Strategies for **operationalizing engagement** with school community members such as parents, businesspeople, representatives of other public institutions (health, law enforcement and safety officials, and others often involved in school community planning), social activists, and students could be pursued.* These may in some ways be similar to strategies for engagement with policymakers and institutions suggested above, but engagement strategies may be logistically different, requiring the scholar to become more widely involved in community entities and events. This articulates to the current activist move in critical anthropology in general.

Some of these engagement strategies are exemplified in Valenzuela et al. (2007). The conference that led to the creation of the *AEQ* special issue on NCLB also led to the creation of the Pacific Oaks Disseminating Education Research (PODER) Institute at Pacific Oaks College. Valenzuela et al.'s article describes how PODER was created to disseminate juried research findings directly to the lay public by translating scholarly work into short papers with special emphasis on reaching those normally disenfranchised. Further, PODER will facilitate what are called "citizens' panels" at various locations across the country, wherein members of the public can come together to learn about education policy and to propose action steps. It is hoped that these efforts will "enhance civic engagement in future national policymaking 'from the bottom up,' enhancing what might be called a more 'participatory democracy'".

For those of us who work in societies where we are not citizens and/or where we are considered foreigners, strategies of engagement will differ according to the unique contexts of policy formation and appropriation. Needless to say, it is imperative for anthropologists of education to speak and write as much as possible in the language(s) of the countries where they conduct their research, and to seek to disseminate their research knowledge in as many policy-relevant forums as possible, including venues of community decision-making and teacher preparation. Having said this, it is also important to recognize that English-dominant organizations, such as The World Bank, hold disproportionate sway

over education policy decisions in many of the non-U.S. societies where we may work, and that addressing our work, in English, to such organizations may also be a powerful and responsible means of policy engagement.

4. It is also worth noting that many of us shape future education policy makers, intermediaries, and implementers in our roles as educators in university settings. So a strategy for more engagement may be as simple as being more purposeful and explicit regarding the types of tasks we are already engaged in. This might include the following strategies: (A) Engaging with colleagues in other departments (public policy, teacher education, educational leadership) to reciprocally provide visiting lectures for classes, introducing other students to anthropological frameworks for understanding policy processes and impacts. (B) This could also include teaching undergraduate and graduate level classes for preservice teachers and those in educational leadership programs (which many of us do) or even co-teaching a class with faculty in teacher education and educational leadership programs. (C) Graduate students of anthropology of education might also be recruited to visit teacher education and educational leadership courses, and even courses in other departments/schools such as public policy, public administration, ethnic studies, social work, etc. This would provide CAE graduate students with experience presenting their work to various audiences, exposing students in other disciplines to basic yet crucial concepts while simultaneously providing the presenter with varied perspectives and critiques on their work.

Action 4: Encourage/support engagement; advocate for the integration of engagement into professional requirements for anthropologists of education. CAE has an opportunity as an organization to encourage and support more CAE scholars to conduct research on policy topics relevant to policymakers and communities and to engage with policymakers, the media/public discourse and communities about this research.

One way to encourage and support this is for CAE to create an annual **CAE Policy Engagement Award**. This award could recognize successful engagement with the media, relevance and accessibility of research for practitioners, and/or active engagement with the public around policy topics. We also recommend that CAE provide organizational resources to members, drawing on both the extensive experience of CAE members and the capacity of individuals or institutions outside the organization. The Policy Forum, the Media Communications Coordination Team (both discussed above), and CAE leadership could be charged with creating such resources. Examples of such resources are working papers/written guidance shared with membership via the organization's listserv; engaging outside consultants during meetings to hold round tables or workshops; establishing mentorship relationships between anthropologists already experiencing success in particular engagement strategies with those who wish to increase their capacity to do so and/or creating internships for students or junior scholars within prestigious education policy/advocacy/leadership institutions.

We recognize that anthropologists of education policy in college and university settings must balance commitments to effective participation in social, political and educational praxis with the

expectations of our profession. Yet we must also recognize that the typical structures of reward and evaluation in most U.S. university settings still privilege “scientific” publication in peer-reviewed journals, and implicitly disdain engagement with policy and practice. Tenure requirements for junior scholars are particularly determining of the kinds of work that they may feel allowed or compelled to do. For those working outside of the tenure system, uncertainty of employment can create another kind of constraint on what we engage in and how.

In schools of education and departments of anthropology, where perhaps most of us work, the commitment to educational policy and practice is rhetorically held in high regard. However, there is good evidence that most actual tenure and promotion decisions more highly reward conventional scholarly publication, than impact on broader fields of policy, public debate, and professional practice.

CAE can and should undertake the drafting of a statement about principles of public scholarship in the anthropology of education.

Most tenure and promotion cases, moreover, must pass the judgment of faculty and administrators in disciplines far removed from education, and these are even more likely to prize traditional scholarship over public engagement. Thus, only tenured and full professors are likely to take the risks associated with public engagement, and even then perhaps with some trepidation.

Clearly, CAE has a role to play in helping to re-negotiate the rules of academic promotion. As a well-respected scholarly organization, CAE can and should undertake the drafting of a statement about principles of public scholarship in the anthropology of education (and perhaps in the social sciences more generally). Such a document would aim to make a principled *defense of* as well as to articulate indicators of *quality for* public scholarship that is oriented more toward engaging practitioner and policy audiences than the typical academic expectations. Public scholarship could include activities related to any of the Actions suggested earlier (which are meant more to spark further dialogue than to serve as a definitive or exhaustive list). The CAE statement could be widely disseminated to faculty and administrators in the academic field of educational studies. CAE might then plan ways in which organizational/institutional leadership can convene over the long term to review progress towards renegotiating these rules of academic promotion, and to strategize next steps.

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