POLICY STUDIES 50

SPRING 1981

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

PURPOSE   To synthesize and solidify the elements of the
                 Policy Studies Major.

                 To regain an overview of the policy process and
                 the integration of the phases of:

                         --problem definition
                         --analysis
                         --choice
                         --implementation
                         --evaluation

                 To practice and demonstrate individual skills
                 necessary to the policy process, such as:

                         --listening
                         --effective communication
                         --group process
                         --clear problem identification
                         --creativity
                         --skepticism
                         --responsibility
                         --self-confidence
                         --historical awareness
                         --discovery of elegant solutions
                           within resource constraints
                         --willingness and ability to recognize,
                           acknowledge and correct mistakes

INTENDED RESULTS

        1. The Upper Valley Co-op will function "better" (to
            be defined) in June 1981 and thereafter than it
            has functioned through March 1981.

        2. Each person in the class will have identified a
            problem (unrelated to the Co-op), solved it, and
            reported on it orally and in writing by June 4.

        3. Together we will have identified, shared, and
            discussed classical literature about human
            problem-solving and decision-making by June 4.
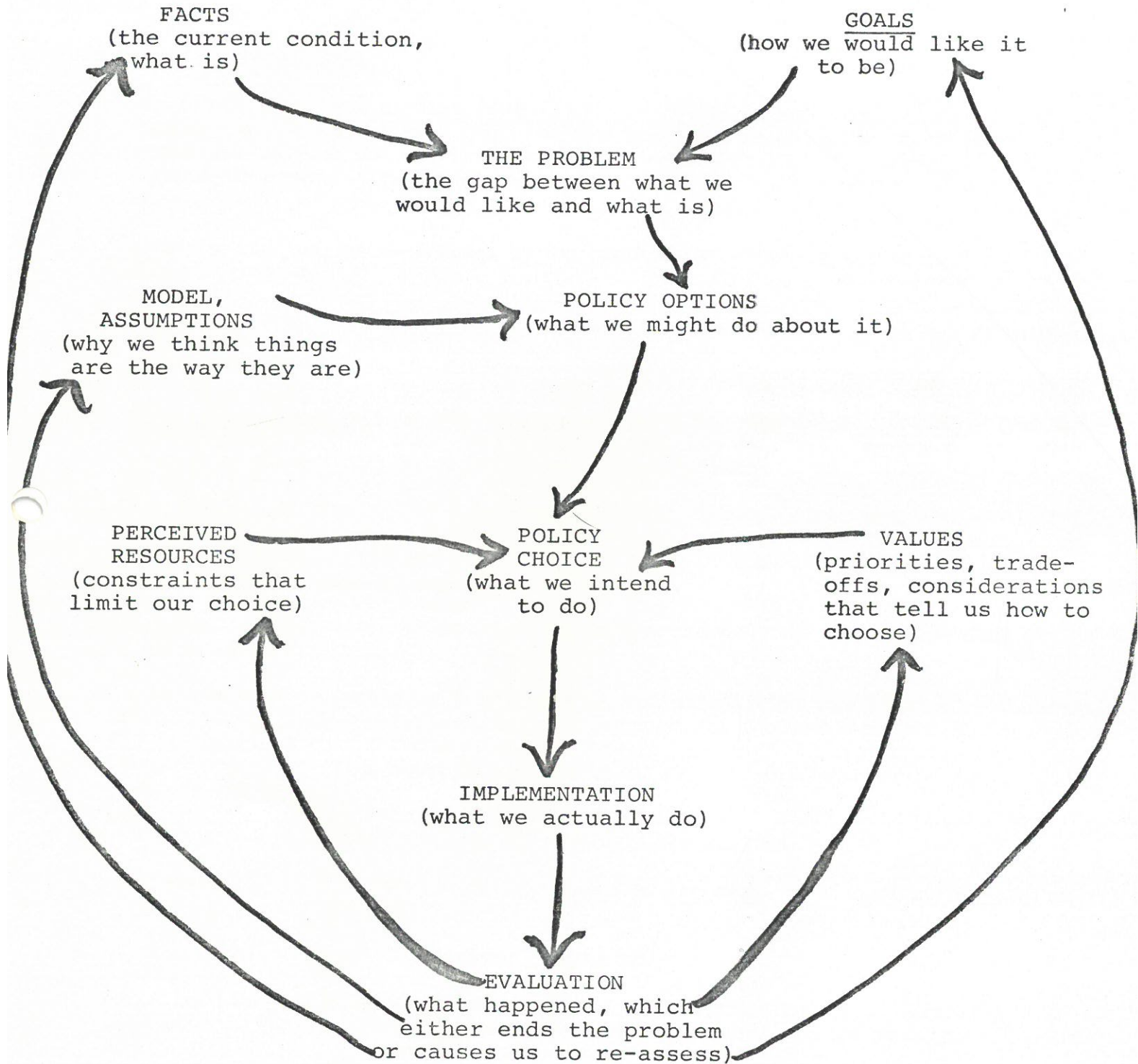
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AGREEMENTS
(subject to amendment and addition,
to be decided by the class as a whole.)

1. I choose to be in this course and to be responsible for
attaining my purpose for being in it.

2. I will be on time for all meetings and stay through the end
of all meetings. I will support all meetings being efficient
and worthwhile and ending on time.

3. I will not miss meetings for trivial reasons. If I miss a
meeting, I will let whoever is conducting the meeting know
beforehand, and I will be responsible for learning what I
have missed and catching up with the group.

4. I will do exactly what I say I will do, when I say I will
do it. If I know I cannot do something, I will not take it
on. If unforeseen events prevent me from meeting an obligation,
I will let whoever is counting on me know immediately that I
will not be able to meet that obligation.

5. If I have a complaint, I will not swallow it. I will deliver
it promptly to a person who can do something about it. I
will not deliver it to anyone who can't do anything about it.

6. I will support all other members of the course (including
the professors) in following the agreements and in realizing
the purpose of the course.

THE POLICY STUDIES MANDALA

FACTS
(the current condition,
what is)

GOALS
(how we would like it
to be)

THE PROBLEM
(the gap between what we
would like and what is)

MODEL,
ASSUMPTIONS
(why we think things
are the way they are)

POLICY OPTIONS
(what we might do about it)

PERCEIVED
RESOURCES
(constraints that
limit our choice)

POLICY
CHOICE
(what we intend
to do)

VALUES
(priorities, trade-
offs, considerations
that tell us how to
choose)

IMPLEMENTATION
(what we actually do)

EVALUATION
(what happened, which
either ends the problem
or causes us to re-assess)

1. Choose a problem that you will solve before the end of the term.

    The problem can be something in your own private life, in the College, your
    family, Hanover, your dorm, whatever. It should be something that you very
    much want to have resolved. You can join up with someone to work on a common
    problem, if you like.

    The selection of the problem is crucial. It should be something that is definitely
    fixable during the ten week term. At the same time it should be worth your effort
    and should stretch you and teach you something-it shouldn't be trivial. Ideally
    it will be something just a bit harder than what you think you can do, something
    that you will be proud of when you have accomplished it.

2. Describe the problem in writing in the terms we have used in earlier Policy
    Studies classes.

    That is, describe the facts (the current condition) and the goal (the way things
    will be when you've got the problem solved). Then give a careful, precise state-
    ment of the problem as the difference between the goal and the current condition.

    Submit this in writing to the course professors before going any further. The write-
    up does not need to be more than one page long, but it should be very clear. When
    you get an OK from us, go on to the next steps.

    You should have come this far by April 7 at the latest. After that date you may be
    called upon without warning in any class meeting to deliver a five (5) minute pro-
    gress report on your project, whatever its state of completion. Please be ready
    to give such a report at any time.

3. Continue to follow the structure of the policy process, as we have described it,
    in working on the problem.

    Write out your assumptions, your options, your choice, your reasons for that choice,
    etc. You may submit partial reports at any time for feedback from the professors.
    If it turns out that structure doesn't work, is not a useful way for you to structure
    your thoughts, tell us about it and change it so that it does describe a policy
    process you prefer.

4. Choose a solution, implement it, and evaluate the results.

    You should do this early on, not at the end of the term, to allow for the possibility
    that your first policy may not work.

5. If the problem has not been solved, repeat the process.

    Look hard at your description of the facts, your assumptions, your choice of options,
    the effectiveness of your implementation, and try again! If you're stuck, come talk
    about it.

    The problem must be solved by the end of the term. If in the course of attacking
    it you learn something that changes your assessment of the project's feasibility,
    come talk to us about it. We may scale down the problem, if necessary, and that
    will tell you something about your ability to assess a problem.

Your work on this assignment will be judged by its <u>effectiveness</u>, not its volume. Trying hard and producing no result will not count for much. Taking time to think clearly and then producing desired results by a little effort directed to an identified leverage point will impress us greatly.

The entire process, including all iterations and the final result, should be written up (completely but concisely) and submitted to us by the end of the term.