

PhD Policy Comprehensive Exam  
Fall 2006

Answer I, II, and any ONE other question:

I. Develop a research design that provides evidence on a theoretically non-trivial problem in the context of either: evaluating the impact of an ongoing public program, policy, or institutional design; comparing the impact of program, policy, or institutional design alternatives; examining cause (or causes) of policy or institutional choice by legislators, legislatures, bureaucrats or bureau

(b). Statistics

Using data from all Texas school districts with a minimum of 1000 students, a group of researchers investigated the impact of the per student athletic budget (in \$, but measured as log of dollars) on two educational district-wide outcomes:

- a) Average daily attendance (ADA)
- b) Percentage of students passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)

empirical literature say about these same questions? (Give some examples from the empirical literature.) What are some current problems of theory and/or problems in the empirical literature, and what opportunities for research do they open? Suggest such a research question, and, if applicable, a corresponding empirical test.

IV. Virtually all nations supply education services to citizens. What, if any, market failure justifies such intervention? Are the failures the same for the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels? Why? If they are different, explain the differences. What are the

**Table 1.** The Impact of Athletics on Student Attendance  
(Dependent Variable = Average Daily Attendance)

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	p-value
Athletic Expenditures (logged)	.0651	4.58	
<i>Control Variables</i>			
Percent black	-.0019	1.71	
Percent Latino	.0064	7.17	

1168

804

**Table 2.** Impact of Athletics on Student Performance: Basic Skills  
(Dependent Variable = TAAS Score)