

How Do Research-Practice Partnerships Generate Knowledge? Fostering Methodological Diversity in a University-Partnered Community School Context

Abstract

Increasing support for research-practice partnerships (RPPs) offers opportunities for researchers to reexamine and redefine rigor and relevance in educational research. Scholarship on RPPs typically focuses on the different perspectives researchers and practitioners bring to the problem-solving table, as well as the different strategies that support mutualistic inquiry. Bringing these ideas together, our symposium explores how methodological diversity and disciplinary perspectives can be nurtured within a university-partnership school context—further articulating the concept of “relevance as a criterion for rigor” in educational research (Gutiérrez & Penuel, 2014).

We propose that university-partnered community schools are especially productive contexts for understanding RPPs. These schools are “multidimensional and multilevel problem-solving ecologies” (Quartz et al., 2017, p. 144) where multiple teams work simultaneously to improve the organization. To fully support these ecologies, researchers need to be able to communicate the affordances and limitations of specific methodologies. Our aim is to examine various methodological approaches to conducting research in collaboration with practitioners in university-partnered schools, and to consider the unique role that these schools can play in understanding the relationship between research design and use.

The symposium organizers have formed an interdisciplinary team to map the types of knowledge generated by RPPs within two university-partnered schools. Although we are all researchers within the Department of Education, we come from different academic divisions, and we bring unique disciplinary lenses and methodological tools to the RPPs. Each of our methodological approaches addresses local needs, but they all do so in different ways.

Call for Participation

This session will highlight four methodologically-diverse RPPs in the two schools. Anchored by a storyboard that examines conceptions of rigor in education research, the session will feature four research story groups that highlight RPPs from the perspectives of evaluation, history, psychology, and participatory design research.

We ask that everyone come to the session prepared to discuss the question: How do research-practice partnerships generate knowledge? We look forward to engaging with colleagues across GSE&IS for this conversation.

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