Assessing the Effectiveness of RPPs: The Case of CAFÉCS

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What are Research-Practice Partnerships?

Long Term, Mutually Beneficial, Intentionally Organized Collaborations

Produce and Use Rigorous Relevant Research

Address Complex Problems Facing Education

(adapted from Coburn, Penuel, and Geil, 2013)
How do we assess RPP effectiveness?

Dimensions for assessing education RPPs and indicators of progress along each dimension

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Dimensions for Assessing RPPs

1. Building Trust and Cultivating Partnership Relationships
2. Conducting Rigorous Research to Inform Action
3. Supporting the Partner Practice Organization in Achieving Its Goals
4. Producing Knowledge that Can Inform Educational Efforts More Broadly
5. Building the Capacity of Participating Researchers, Practitioners, Practice Organizations, and Research Organizations to Engage in Partnership Work
Provide CS supports to teachers and bring high quality CS to all students in CPS.
CAFÉCS problem-solving cycle: ECS Failure Rate

OCS Identifies a Problem

CAFÉCS team develops hypotheses to test

Data analysis clarifies the problem

Research findings are shared and discussed

Research informs OCS strategies and research agenda
Conducting Research to Inform Action

Finding:

CAFÉCS conducts research that addresses problems of practice facing CPS.

Example:

OCS Identified ECS Failure Rate

What made it work?

- CAFÉCS members share a common goal: to support the OCS to bring CS to all students.

- Weekly and monthly meetings provide a space for problem-solving and brainstorming.
Building Trust and Cultivating Partnership Relationships

Finding:

CAFÉCS has routines that promote collaborative decision making

Example:

CAFÉCS collaboratively developed hypotheses to test related to ECS failure rate:
- Teacher characteristics
- Student characteristics
- Course implementation

What made it work?

- Collaborative decision-making is a hallmark of CAFÉCS ethos and meetings
- Team members value diverse expertise of group to inform research design
Conducting Rigorous Research to Inform Action

Finding:
CAFÉCS conducts research to clarify and further specify problems of practice

Example:
Attending teacher PD reduces ECS failure rate

What made it work?
- Data sharing MOU
- Research design was rigorous yet feasible given timeline
Conducting Rigorous Research to Inform Action

Finding:

Findings are shared in ways that take account of the needs of CPS.

Example:

The Learning Partnership shared and discussed the failure rate findings at a whole team meeting.

What made it work?

CAFÉCS whole team meetings offer learning opportunities:

- Problem solving and brainstorming
- Discussions to build common understandings towards shared goals, vision, purpose
- Sharing research findings
Supporting the practice organization in achieving its goals

Finding:
CAFÉCS provides research and evidence to support improvements in OCS

Example:
Research informs OCS strategies and CAFÉCS research agenda:
- Sharing information with principals
- NSF EAGER Grant to develop hybrid course

What made it work?
- CAFÉCS arms OCS staff with relevant research that support productive discussions
CAFÉCS problem-solving cycle: ECS Failure Rate

- OCS Identified a Problem
- CAFÉCS team developed hypotheses to test
- Data analysis clarified the problem
- Relationships
  - Formal structures
- Research findings are shared and discussed
- Research informs OCS strategies and research agenda
Thank you!

Please contact Erin Henrick or Steven McGee with any questions.

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Extra slides
Why is it important to assess research practice partnerships?

- To monitor and assess things RPPs aim to do well
- To inform RPP planning and continuous improvement efforts
- To help identify the functions, structures, or processes that work best for increasing the *impact* of RPPs.
Considerations for RPP evaluation

- Consider the purpose of evaluation/assessment
  - Inform efforts to gauge progress within a partnership
  - Demonstrate accomplishments/impact to local stakeholders or funders
  - Contribute to research on RPP effectiveness

- Determine the type of data needed to accomplish the purpose of the evaluation
  - Boutique assessment measures versus general measures
  - Quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods
  - Nature of data collection (ongoing? Feasible with partnership resources?)
## Conduct research to inform action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator of Progress</th>
<th>CAFÉCS Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The RPP conducts research to clarify and further specify problems of practice.</td>
<td>- ECS Failure rate analysis</td>
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<td>Findings are shared in ways that take account of the needs of the practice organization.</td>
<td>- Monthly CAFÉCS meetings offer opportunities to learn about and contribute ongoing CAFÉCS research.</td>
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<td>- Engaged outside expertise to develop comprehensive communication plan</td>
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Supporting the partner practice organization in achieving its goals

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<tr>
<td>The RPP provides research and evidence to support improvements in the partner organization.</td>
<td>Failure rate analysis → Teachers who attend ECS PD have less student failure rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>The RPP helps the practice organization identify productive strategies for addressing problems of practice.</td>
<td>RESEARCH INFORMED STRATEGY: share information with principals and network chiefs → to increase number of teachers attending ECS PD</td>
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<tr>
<td>The RPP informs the practice organization’s implementation and ongoing adjustments of improvement strategies.</td>
<td>DATA INFORMED PLANNING: CAFÉCS has begun providing PD facilitators with a “next day” link to survey data collected after PDs to inform improvements to PD.</td>
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<td>The RPP develops and shares knowledge and theory that contributes to the research base.</td>
<td>- Conferences, papers, active participation in RPPsforCS, NSF R+P RPP meeting facilitators</td>
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Building the capacity of participating individuals and organizations to engage in partnership work.

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| The work of the RPP contributes to a change in the practice organization’s norms, culture, and routines around the use of research and evidence. | - CAFÉCS meetings  
- CAFÉCS collaborative research opportunities |
Development of the Dimensions and Indicators

1. Review of relevant literature
2. Three rounds of participant interviews to revise dimensions and indicators
   a. One hour recorded interviews with 20 researchers and practitioners from all RPP types (alliances, NICs, and DBRs)
3. Researcher professional experience
Building trust and cultivating partnership relationships

1. Researchers and practitioners routinely work together.
2. The RPP establishes routines that promote collaborative decision making and guard against power imbalances.
3. RPP members establish norms of interaction that support collaborative decision making and equitable participation in all phases of the work.
4. RPP members recognize and respect one another’s perspectives and diverse forms of expertise.
5. Partnership goals take into account team members’ work demands and roles in their respective organizations.
Conducting Rigorous Research to Inform Action

RPP conducts research that addresses problems of practice facing the practice organization.

1. The RPP establishes systematic processes for collecting, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing data.
2. Decisions about research methods and designs balance rigor and feasibility.
3. The RPP conducts research to clarify and further specify problems of practice prior to identifying and assessing strategies for addressing those problems.
4. Findings are shared in ways that take account of the needs of the practice organization.
Supporting the partner practice organization in achieving its goals

The RPP provides research and evidence to support improvements in the partner organization.

1. The RPP helps the practice organization identify productive strategies for addressing problems of practice.
2. The RPP informs the practice organization’s implementation and ongoing adjustments of improvement strategies.
Producing knowledge that can inform educational improvement efforts more broadly

1. The RPP develops and shares knowledge and theory that contributes to the research base.
2. The RPP develops and shares new tools and/or routines that can be adapted to support improvement work in other settings.
3. The RPP develops two dissemination plans, one that supports partnership goals and a second plan for broader dissemination.
Building the capacity of individuals and organizations

1. Team members develop professional identities that value engaging in sustained collaborative inquiry with one another to address persistent problems of practice.
2. Team members assume new roles and develop the capacity to conduct partnership activities.
3. Participating research and educational organizations provide capacity building opportunities to team members.
4. The work of the RPP contributes to a change in the practice organization’s norms, culture, and routines around the use of research and evidence.
5. There are shifts in professional expectations for education researchers and for practitioners that reward members from each organization for sustained participation in significant partnership work.
6. The RPP establishes conditions in the practice organization that lead to sustained impact beyond the life of the partnership.
7. Research and educational organizations allocate resources to support partnership work.
CAFÉCS Partnership

Office of CS in Chicago Public Schools

CAFÉCS

Resources, Expertise, and Research

Provide CS supports to teachers and bring high quality CS to all students in CPS

The Learning Partnership

University CS Faculty
# Building trust and cultivating partnership relationships

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<td>Members routinely work together</td>
<td>Ongoing, sustained leadership team weekly meetings; monthly CAFÉCS whole team meetings; quarterly retreats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Routines promote collaborative decision making and guard against power imbalances</td>
<td>Interviewees report that collaborative decision making is a hallmark of CAFÉCS weekly meetings and CAFÉCS ethos</td>
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<td>* ADDITIONAL INDICATOR: Structures are in place that support ongoing collaboration between organizations</td>
<td>Existence of a data sharing agreement (MOU)</td>
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*What does this look like and how does this play out as team grows and matures?*
CAFÉCS monthly meetings offer important learning opportunities

- Updates related to CAFÉCS activities
- Problem solving and brainstorming
- Discussions to build common understandings towards shared goals, vision, purpose
- Sharing research findings
Missed opportunities: Current meeting routines impact collaborative learning opportunities

- Challenging to digest research and contribute substantially to conversation when the findings are not shared in advance

CAFÉCS improvements:

- Research findings are now shared in advance of CAFÉCS meeting, along with thought-provoking questions
- Meetings now include opportunities to engage in sense-making with others (e.g. think, pair, share between OCS members, university faculty, and The Learning Partnership)
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<th>Dimensions of effective RPP</th>
<th>Indicators of progress</th>
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<td>Each dimension reflects the desired goals of those currently engaged in RPP work. These are goals to which participants believe they should be held to account by stakeholders, including funding agencies.</td>
<td>Where to look for evidence that an RPP is making progress on a particular dimension of effectiveness. The indicators are intended to be customized by RPP and guide the development of measures.</td>
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Importance of an RPP theory of action for assessing effectiveness

- A set of underlying assumptions about how the RPP designs its work to accomplish its goals.

- Helps identify feasible short term and long term indicators of progress that would be useful to measure and track.
CAFÉCS Formative Assessment: Data and Methods

Data
- Interviews and Focus Groups
  - November 2017 interviews with CAFÉCS leadership team
  - January 2019 interviews with CAFÉCS whole team and leadership team quarterly retreat
- Artifacts
  - Ongoing leadership team meeting notes, annual report
- Attending Meetings

Methods
- Program-based evaluation design
- Qualitative analysis