

Handout 2: Example Research Agendas

Linear Research Agenda

A linear research agenda is **sequential** in nature; the research follows a series of steps to the goal and generally increases in rigor.

- Example topic: High school graduation
- Example action goal: Increase the percentage of District X students who graduate from high school.
- Example research activities:
 - Descriptive study of high school dropout rates for key subgroups of students.
 - Descriptive study of reenrollment rates of students in traditional high schools and education trajectories of reenrollees.
 - Randomized control trial examining the impact of alternative degree programs on high school graduation rates.

Topical Research Agenda

A topical research agenda is **thematic** in nature; the research is related by subject matter or issue.

- Example topic: Mathematics learning
- Example action goal: Increase mathematics achievement in the Appalachian region.
- Example research activities:
 - RCT examining the impact of student access to algebra I in grade 8.
 - Descriptive study of math education practices for students with disabilities in six schools in two Appalachian states.
 - Descriptive studies of math performance patterns for students with disabilities in Virginia and West Virginia.