REL Pacific Ask A REL Response

Other

November 2019

Question:

What are best practices and guiding questions for education policy reviews?

Response:

Following an established REL Pacific research protocol, we conducted a web-based search for resources related to guiding questions or recommendations to support education policy reviews (see Methods section for search terms and resource selection criteria). We first focused our search on studies in the Pacific and other indigenous contexts for greater relevancy to our partners in the Pacific region; however, we included studies with more generalizable findings due to the limited amount of research available in these contexts.

References are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance. Descriptions of the resources are quoted directly from the publication abstracts. We have not evaluated the quality of references and the resources provided in this response. We offer them only for your reference. Also, our search included the most commonly used research resources, but they are not comprehensive and other relevant references and resources may exist.

Research References

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. (2018). *Guidelines for reviewing state higher education governance structures. State Policy Brief.* Washington, DC: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED592232.

> *From the abstract:* "When contemplating a major change to public higher education governance, state leaders should bear in mind several guiding principles. Such principles can ensure that current and future students will have access to an affordable, quality postsecondary education. They can also help ensure that the state's system of higher education meets public purposes and is effective, responsive, and accountable. This State Policy Brief details seven principles based on years of research, observation, and experience by the Association of Governing Boards, and on the scholarly work of several nationally known organizations and experts."

Harvey, M. & Kosman, B. (2014). A model for higher education policy review: The case study of an assessment policy. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 36*(1), 88–98. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1029660.

> *From the abstract:* "The development of a standards-based assessment policy represented a significant cultural shift in assessment practice at one university. Concurrently, the implementation of a policy framework represented a significant procedural shift in policy development and review. The assessment policy was the first policy scheduled to be reviewed through the new framework, specifically in recognition of the pivotal role of assessment to the credibility of qualifications and the academic reputation of the institution. However, the policy framework did not specify a review process. While examples of generic approaches to policy review methodology and process were provided in the literature, there were limited examples directly relevant to higher education. This paper presents a customised model for policy review developed and trialled through a higher education institution using an assessment policy as the case study."

Oliver, S., Bangpan, M., & Dickson, K. (2018). Producing policy relevant systematic reviews: Navigating the policy-research interface. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice, 14*(2), 197–220. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1182726.

> *From abstract:* "This study employed insider research and reflective practice to investigate exchanges across the research-policy interface to understand the practice of producing policy-relevant systematic reviews. Interviewees came from 11 systematic reviews or review programmes which spanned four models of policy-relevant reviews and between them provided evidence for understanding policy problems, comparing policy options, or implementing policy decisions. No review methodology was found to be uniquely appropriate for policy-relevant systematic reviews. It was the mutual engagement across the research-policy interface that made the reviews policy-relevant. This involved thinking about the issues and seeing them from multiple viewpoints to identify and shape questions; this prompted implicit or explicit value-driven debates. The intellectual work to shape a policy-

relevant systematic review is an iterative, collective endeavour that requires partners from either side of the policy-research interface to engage with the unfamiliar, listen, challenge and co-construct questions and answers."

Viennet, R. & B. Pont. (2017). Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework. *OECD Education Working Papers, No. 162*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED581629.

From the abstract: "This literature review focuses on education policy implementation, its definition, processes and determinants. It aims to clarify what implementing policies involve in complex education systems to support policy work, building on the literature and country examples. An introduction delves into the reasons behind the need to update the concept of education policy implementation, which is defined as a purposeful and multidirectional change process aiming to put a specific policy into practice and which affects an education system on several levels. The paper then analyses the determinants that hinder or facilitate the process and groups them under four dimensions which support effective implementation: smart policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement, conducive context and a coherent implementation strategy. Based on these dimensions, the paper proposes a generic framework and a complementary set of questions and principles for action that can guide policy makers to design, analyse and carry out their education policy implementation processes."

Additional Organizations to Consult

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). www.nchems.org

From the website: "The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) is a private nonprofit (501)(c)(3)organization whose mission is to improve strategic decision making in higher education for states and institutions in the United States and abroad. The NCHEMS Information Center for State Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis (The Information Center) provides state policymakers and analysts' timely and accurate data and information that are useful in making sound higher education policy decisions. The Information Center is a comprehensive 'one-stop-shop' for state-level higher education data and information. To that end, NCHEMS has become the acknowledged national leader in converting data into information that supports strategic decision-making."

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- "guiding questions" and "education policy reviews"
- "guiding questions for education policy review"

- "education policy review" and "recommendations"
- "education policy review" and "recommendations" and "higher education"

Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of over 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences, for relevant resources. Additionally, we searched the academic database Google Scholar.

Reference Search and Selection Criteria

REL Pacific searched ERIC and other academic journal databases for studies that were published in English-language peer-reviewed research journals within the last 10 years. REL Pacific prioritized documents that are accessible online and publicly available, and prioritized references that provide practical information based on peer-reviewed research for the higher education leader who requested this Ask A REL.[1] Sources included in this document were last accessed in November 2019. Methodological priorities and considerations given to the following in the review and selection of the references:
- Study types: randomized control trials, quasi experiments, surveys, descriptive data analyses, and literature reviews.
- Target population, sample size, and study duration.
- Limitations and generalizability of the findings and conclusions.