



Cleveland Partnership for English Learner Success: Creating a Research Agenda

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Agenda

- Introductions and Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest overview
- Group discussion about your program's model
- Identify and prioritize research topics
- Develop and prioritize research questions
- Put it all together into a research agenda

Introductions

- Name
- Where you work
- Your role
- Share a tip for working with you

Group Agreements

About REL Midwest



Cleveland Partnership for English Learner Success (CLE-PELS)

Partnerships are tasked with addressing various challenges through research, technical assistance, and engagement projects.

REL Midwest is supporting two new partnerships.

Partnership Goal

CLE-PELS will leverage existing data from the district to:

- 1) Increase the district's capacity to access, conduct, interpret, and make sense of research on English learner (EL) success.
- 2) Support the use of EL research in decision making at the school and district levels.

Specifically, partnership members will use research to understand and address the needs of a growing and increasingly more diverse EL student population in the district, including how this group of students has changed over time, determining what factors are associated with academic success, and identifying, implementing, and improving practices aimed at increasing EL student success.

Today's Purpose

- Engage in a collaborative process.
- Identify research priorities.
- Develop a set of research questions.
- Develop a coherent research agenda for the next three to five years.

Today's Goals

- Review different types of research.
- Identify and prioritize research topics.
- Generate related research questions.
- Refine and prioritize research questions to form the initial research agenda.

Program Model

Multilingual Multicultural Education Office Program Model

From the website:

<http://clevelandmetroschools.org/Domain/43>

“The mission of the Multilingual Multicultural Education Department is to provide equal educational opportunities, ensure a qualified and culturally competent instructional staff, and promote cultural diversity in support of a premier school district.”

Identify and Revisit Possible Research Topics

From Our Kickoff Meeting

1. Factors contributing to or hindering EL success (i.e., EL density, EL programing, growth versus proficiency)
2. EL graduation and college enrollment rates
3. Best practices for use of EL research and evidence

Goals and Research Topics

Record on your handout:

- Topics that fit under your alliance's goal
- If you are unsure of a topic, include it in the "possible" column.

Focus on topics that are most important to you.

You will have five minutes to think and write by yourself.

Small-Group Discussions

- Break up into small groups.
- On large sticky notes, write down the topics your group would like considered as priority topics.



Take a Break



Types of Research and Evidence

Research Type: Descriptive

- Examines trends, baselines, or experiences of individuals, groups, or programs
- Cannot determine cause and effect
- Cannot explain why something is happening
- Often used as a baseline
- Can be qualitative or quantitative

Research Type: Correlational

- Looks at the relationships among two or more variables or characteristics, but does not imply that one causes another
- Tests whether relationships among variables are “statistically significant,” meaning they are not likely due to chance
- Among the methods: analysis of existing data from administrative or other state, district, or school datasets

Research Type: Causal

- Examines questions about the impact of a policy, program, or practice
- Builds on descriptive and correlational studies
- Uses the most rigorous methodology

Research Questions and Agenda Overview

Researchable Questions

What is a researchable question?

- Reasonable
- Appropriate
- Answerable
- Specific

Researchable Questions

Where do researchable questions come from?

- Questions, concerns, and values of stakeholders
- Important issues in the field or research literature
- Professional standards or guidelines
- Views and knowledge of experts
- One's own views and judgment

Research Agendas

What is a research agenda?

- Identifies research priorities and questions for the group
- Is coherent
- Leads to rigorous and relevant research that is actionable
- May include current or future projects

What does a research agenda look like?

- Linear
- Topical

Example: Coherent Linear Research Agenda

Topic: High school graduation

Research questions:

- What are the high school dropout rates for key subgroups of students?
- What are the effects of alternative high school programs on students' degree completion and graduation?

Studies:

- Descriptive study of high school dropout rates for key subgroups
- Descriptive study of reenrollment rates in traditional high schools and educational trajectories of reenrollees
- Randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the impact of alternative programs for degree completion on high school graduation

Example: Coherent Topical Research Agenda

Topic: Mathematics learning

Research questions:

- What is the impact of grade 8 students' access to Algebra I on their mathematics achievement?
- How do students with disabilities perform in mathematics?

Studies:

- RCT of the impact of student access to Algebra I in grade 8
- Descriptive study of mathematics education practices for students with disabilities
- Descriptive study of mathematics performance patterns for students with disabilities

Prioritize Research Topics

Process

1. Brainstorm the topics: Done!
2. Clarify: Clarify the topics by asking questions, reviewing our affinity groupings, and making any necessary changes.
3. Advocate: Participants have an opportunity to advocate, in a brief positive way, for a topic. We are not arguing against topics!
4. Canvass the group to see where interest lies.

Lunch



Generate Research Questions

Example: Gender in Schools

Goal: Provide research that informs and promotes gender equity in schools.

Topic	Subtopic	Questions	Timing
Girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)	Tracking achievement differences		
	Encouraging interest and enrollment in STEM		
	Persistence in STEM majors		
Attainment for boys			
Structured inequality			

Moving From Subtopics to Questions

Subtopic	Questions	Timing
Tracking achievement differences	What are gender differences in STEM achievement in K–12 and how have they changed over time?	
	Do gender differences in STEM achievement vary among districts and schools?	
Encouraging interest and enrollment in STEM	What can teachers do?	
	Are single-sex schools and classrooms better?	
	What programs help promote STEM for girls?	
Persistence in STEM majors		

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	Do gender differences in STEM achievement vary among districts and schools?	
Encouraging interest and enrollment in STEM	What can teachers do?	
	Are single-sex schools and classrooms better?	
	What programs help promote STEM for girls?	
Persistence in STEM majors		

Generating Research Questions

In small groups, work for 30 minutes to generate research questions related to identified priority research topics.

Think about the following:

- What are some possible research questions for these topics?
- What data would be needed to research these questions?

Share Questions

Sharing Questions

Review the posted questions and consider:

- What would you change or edit?
- What would you delete?
- What would you add?
- What kinds of studies would result from the questions (descriptive, correlational, or causal)?
- Briefly discuss with a partner.

Take a Break



Refine Questions

Refining Questions

Whole group:

- Edit, add, delete, and combine questions as necessary (and write down your changes).
- What kinds of studies would result from the questions (descriptive, correlational, or impact)?
- What questions are important to you?
- What research topic and questions can provide a meaningful research agenda?

Prioritize Research Questions

Prioritizing Research Questions

Prioritize the research questions in each priority subtopic area.

- Advocate
- Canvass

**Put It All Together
Into a Research
Agenda**

Preliminary Research Agenda

Review identified priority topics and questions.

- Any surprises?

How many top-rated questions should be on the agenda? Consider the following:

- Alliance goal
- Types of research
- Sequence
- Short- and long-term nature of questions

Research Agenda Template

Look at the research agenda template.

Use the template to organize the research agenda.

Document and summarize the main research topics, subtopics, and questions.

Next Steps

Next Steps

- Create a summary document from the workshop.
- Establish opportunities for regular review and refinement of the agenda.
- Utilize the agenda as a “living document.”
- Collaborate to:
 - Identify other areas of funding
 - William T. Grant Foundation
 - Institute of Education Sciences
 - Develop one-pagers about the partnership and specific studies.

What worked today?

What could have been better?

What is a key takeaway that you will share with a colleague?

Thanks!

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