AERA Open Special Topic Call for Papers

Empirical Research on Research-Practice Partnerships

Special Topic Editors: William R. Penuel and Heather C. Hill

There is growing interest among scholars, educators, and funding agencies in the promise of research-practice partnerships. Advocates argue that such partnerships can enable greater use of research in decision making, address persistent problems of practice, and improve educational outcomes. At the same time, empirical scholarship on research-practice partnerships is only beginning to emerge. There is a need for more research on full range of potential RPP outcomes (e.g., impacts on local policies) and on strategies for building and maintaining partnerships (Coburn & Penuel, 2016). Research-practice partnerships are atypical arrangements between researchers and educators, and so developing understanding of the dynamics and potential of partnerships is an important research goal.

This Special Topic of AERA Open seeks empirical research papers on research-practice partnerships. We are especially interested in papers that respond to calls for more research on the dynamics and outcomes of partnerships as outlined in Coburn and Penuel (2016). Papers should focus on one or more arrangements that meet the definition of an RPP: long-term, mutualistic collaborations between educators and researchers to investigate and address problems of practice within educational systems. Partners can include researchers from universities, nonprofits and government agencies, and educators at all levels of educational systems and different sectors (e.g., museums, community-based organizations). Some partnerships also include policy makers, parents, youth, and community representatives. We especially encourage papers that compare dynamics and outcomes of multiple partnerships, as well as partnerships that include novel arrangements or partners. We also welcome papers that address the challenges or opportunities of RPPs in addressing issues of equity and diversity in education. We also welcome papers that shed light on the opportunities that partnerships present for producing new knowledge.

Possible topics:

- Challenges experienced by RPPs and how they've overcome them
- Problem finding / definition in RPPs
- Defining equity in RPPs
- Evaluating RPPs
- How different forms of expertise are surfaced, used in RPPs
- Relationship building in RPPs
- Capacity building in RPPs
- Preparation of researchers, educational leaders for RPP work
- Governance in partnerships
• Designs for RPPs that provide opportunities for multiple stakeholders to have a say in the focus
• Design in partnerships
• Involvement of practitioners in research activities
• Evidence use in RPPs
• Impacts of RPPs on policies and practices of systems
• Impact of RPP designed programs, practices, tools on teaching and learning

Interested authors should submit a single-spaced, one-page abstract describing their proposed article (plus a one-page description of the partnership[s]; see timeline below). Authors chosen from the pool of abstracts will be invited to submit a full manuscript. Invited manuscripts will be peer-reviewed, meaning that invitation to submit a full manuscript is not a guarantee of acceptance. Accepted manuscripts are subject to AERA Open’s introductory open access fee (see https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/aera-open#submission-guidelines for details).

Publication Timeline:
January 15, 2018: Due date for abstract + one-page description of the partnership(s) being studied, to help us determine whether RPP meets definition above (submit to AERAOpenEditors@aera.net)
March 1, 2018: Invitation to authors to submit manuscripts
August 1, 2018: Full manuscripts due
From Late 2018 on: Articles published on a rolling basis as they are accepted

For background, prospective authors should consult:

Please direct questions regarding the Special Topic to Bill Penuel or Heather Hill (william.penuel@colorado.edu, heather_hill@gse.harvard.edu). Please consult the AERA Open website for general guidelines on manuscript submission.