Researcher -practitioner partnerships

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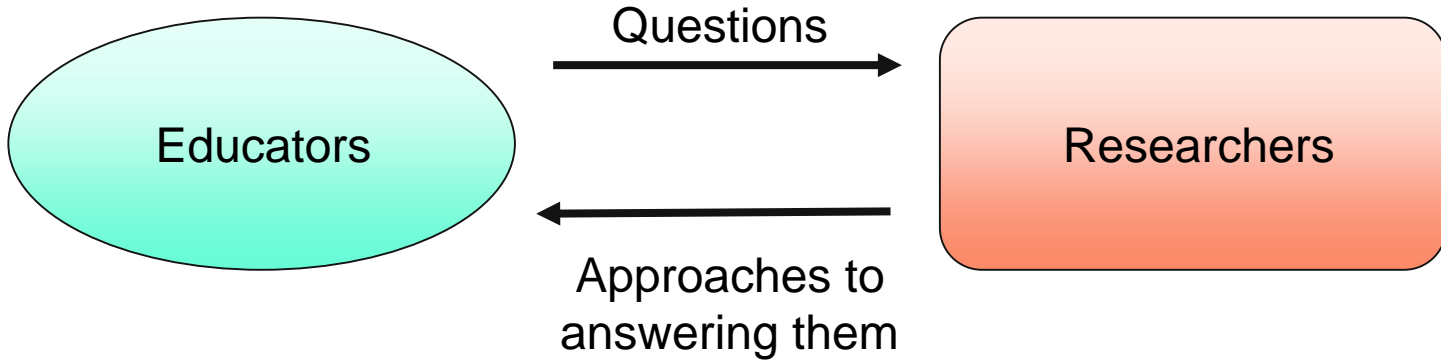RAND Corporation

Overview

- RAND
- Researcher-practitioner partnerships
  - Policy questions
  - Approaches to answering them
  - Contracts, data, and funding
- Examples of successful studies

RAND Corporation

- Non-profit, non-partisan research firm
- Produces reports, recommendations, tools, analysis
- Partners with community college districts and state administration

Elements of a successful partnership: information flow

Big questions

- Why do students leave college? Can we intervene?
- How will SCFF change funding?
- Where should districts spend the marginal dollar?
  - Facilities, instruction, financial aid, benefits
  - How should districts use AB 19 funds? Are their choices effective?

The best approaches allow for causal claims

- Randomized experiment
- Natural experiment using one or more of...
  - Policy change pre/post
  - Comparison site or group (with no change)
  - Eligibility cutoff
  - Geographic boundary
  - Structured rollout
- But a lot can be learned from scanning the field, describing the status, documenting implementation, counting and running simulations

Example of randomized trial: A$AP

- First implemented at City University of New York
- Financial and in-kind aid
- An academic pathway
- Comprehensive advising

Wraparound services increased 3-year graduation rate from 22% to 40%

Example of quasi -experiments: Promise programs

- Knox Achieves
  - Predecessor to Tennessee Promise
  - County and pre/post comparisons

Last-dollar aid plus mentorship increased seamless enrollment rate by 3-5 percentage points

- Oregon Promise
  - State and pre/post comparisons

Last-dollar aid increased seamless enrollment rate by 4-5 percentage points

Example of implementation studies: Texas

- RAND has studied several initiatives
  - Competency-based education
  - Community college baccalaureate
- Map out challenges, assess feasibility
- Speak to key stakeholders

Going beyond the average effect

- Want to know what works → we need more resources for this
- Want to know for whom, in what context → where to allocate scarce resources

Example: the Wisconsin Grant

- Need-based financial aid for technical college students
- Legislature controls budget, but policy making board controls allocation
- **Question: which students benefit most?** Given Pell and other aid
- Answer: students with most financial need
  (see forthcoming report)

Additional $1,000 aid increased 3-year graduation rate from 19% to 21%

Elements of a successful partnership: next steps

- Data sharing agreement
- Funding source
- Dissemination plan

Example: Ohio Department of Higher Education

- Federal grant from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
- Established data sharing agreement for administrative records
- Also conduct interviews with campus leaders
- Goal is to study implementation of stackable credentials

Let's start the conversation

- What are your questions?
- What kind of evidence would persuade your constituents?

  ...

- What kind of data can you access and share?
- Who might fund this work?

Potential example in California

- Use of AB 19 funds
- Colleges make different choices
- Colleges have different starting points
- Account for both systematically, requires baseline data
- California is unique - a large "laboratory" for different policies

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