

B3: Research Partnerships: The What, How, and Why of Conducting Research in the Context of a Partnership

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. | *Richmond*

1. Descriptive Information

<p>B3: Research Partnerships: The What, How, and Why of Conducting Research in the Context of a Partnership</p> <p>Panelists will discuss three different types of research partnerships in early care and learning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) university-state agency research partners2) research partnerships with tribal communities3) community-university research partnerships. <p>The studies conducted as part of these partnership represent a range of settings (e.g., Head Start, home-based child care, home visiting). The moderator will engage panelists and participants in discussions about the strengths and challenges in partnering with various organizations and communities to conduct research and how these partnerships allow for the co-creation of research that supports the development of culturally grounded research methods and activities. The role of policy—in influencing the partnerships and informing the work—will also be discussed. Join us for an engaging discussion of conducting research in the context of a partnership.</p>	<p>Facilitator Kelly Maxwell, Child Trends</p> <p>Panelists Roberta Weber, Oregon State University and Tom George, Oregon Department of Education <i>Oregon's University-State Agency Research Partnership</i></p> <p>Jessica Barnes-Najor and KyungSook Lee, Michigan State University and Ann Cameron, Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's Region XI Head Start program <i>A Research Partnership with Tribal Communities In Michigan</i></p> <p>Colleen Vesely, George Mason University <i>Community-University Research Partnerships</i></p> <p>Scribe Katie Caldwell, ICF</p>
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2. Documents Available on Website

- A Research Partnership with Tribal Communities in Michigan: Wiba Anung
- Supporting the Use of Administrative Data in Early Care and Education Research

3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Roberta Weber and Tom George**
- Oregon has had a strong research partnership for 30 years. Currently includes 4 major universities: Oregon State, Portland State and Western Oregon, and Education Northwest and includes child care state agency stakeholders. The partnership identifies research questions to explore to meet the state's needs. The partners meet monthly or bimonthly, usually online.
 - Past work includes: structural indicators, evaluation of subsidy program, workforce studies, professional development and training
- **How is the partnership structured:**
 - Virtual organization, not in any one agency or organization
 - Bobbie is the coordinator but the partnership really seeks to belong to all, not just one university
 - The questions the partnership seek to address on an on-going basis are:
 - How much early child care does Oregon have and need?
 - How affordable is child care?
 - What is the quality of child care?
 - The partnership has data in these areas going back to 1990.

- The partnership also identifies questions nobody is answering which are usually on the child level.
 - Most of the questions are driven by state needs.
- Once a year, policymakers, practitioners and researchers come together for one day to learn about research in the state.
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Jessica Barnes Najor, KyungSook Lee, Ann Cameron**
- Ann Cameron oversees the Head Start program for 9 tribes in Michigan and represents the remaining two tribal Head Starts in the state. Their research partner is Michigan State University.
 - The partnership was created specifically to advance tribal specific early childhood research
 - One goal of the partnership is development of tools to be used with AI/AN children as there is a lack of available tools.
- **How is it structured?**
 - Began with an MOU in 2005 and has been a long standing relationship
 - Currently have an MOU that details the responsibilities of each partner and how decisions are made together
- **Summary of Presentation #3: Colleen Vesely**
- Community based participatory research project with undocumented immigrant mothers from Central America and their children.
 - Partnership between George Mason University, the women, and representatives from local schools. These partners make up the project's Community Advisory Board (CAB)
 - The project came to be because a local foundation was interested in funding research related to early care and education and immigrants.
 - CAB decided that the first step was to move forward with the research to understand the community needs. So far, about 134 surveys have been collected from the community and 30 in-depth interviews have taken place.
 - The team has implemented a series of action steps, community outreach events, and "know your rights" trainings
 - Have been conducting research and action steps with community members related to planning for possible deportation and detainment
- **How is the partnership structured?**
 - Community organizer is the lynchpin of the project, she is the board president and is a social work graduate from George Mason—and lives in the community. Also, she is bilingual and bicultural, and is an immigrant herself.
 - On the CAB, only the members of the community are voting members, the researchers are ex officio - they do not vote to equalize the distribution of power.
 - Researchers bring the money, 50% of the money goes toward the community by paying CAB members and sponsoring community events
 - The team found that the community needs help filling out school forms so a community school/preschool registration day was organized.
 - One of the goals of the project is to extend the reach of existing services to better serve the community and connect them with needed resources.
 - Having the time to do the relationship building correctly is key for this project

4. Brief Summary of Discussion

- Question: We have struggled with change in leadership with our partnerships; how have you handled it?
 - Tried to build a larger network across the early childhood field so that one person leaving does not put a temporary stop to the work
 - With partnerships, relationships are the core. It has to be very safe to talk about what a representative or agency needs to get out of a partnership and during transitions it's important to create a respectful way to make the new person see what their organization is getting

- Question: At some universities, there is a lot of pressure to develop something and then turn it into a source of revenue down the road. Do you have issues with intellectual property in the context of partnerships?
 - Oregon resolves the intellectual property issue via contracts. The data are public property and other resources are laid out as to who they belong to in the contract.
 - At Michigan State, there is a unit called “University Outreach and Engagement” which encourages academics to work collaboratively with communities. For this specific partnership, products are co-owned by the university and the Inter-Tribal Council and with these jointly owned products there needs to be a discussion within the partnership about using the products in other ways.

Other Benefits?

- Oregon: The state gets timely and high quality research that is very policy relevant; they also learn from experts in the field. Researchers get to know the state’s research priorities and interests.
- Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan: This partnership has opened the door to other opportunities for our program.
- Michigan State: We are glad to be making progress in an area in which very few people are doing work right now and to be a part of that is fantastic.
- George Mason: We have presented our work to the city government, have seen more and more families reunifying, have helped schools develop registration questions around family reunification. For the researchers it has given us a chance to regularly practice cultural humility.

Challenges?

- Oregon: Integrated interagency data, state resources and budget, changing technology, staff turnover, state administrative process - most procurement offices take a long time to get contracts through the process.
- Michigan: Measurement issues are complicated and hard to communicate to partners
- George Mason: trust is an important commodity, there exists mistrust among community members
 - This important work is hard to do within existing structures sometimes (such as tenure at a university, IRB issues, etc.)

5. Summary of Key issues raised (facilitators are encouraged to spend the last 3-5 minutes of sessions summarizing the key issues raised during the session; bullets below are prompts for capturing the kinds of issues we’re looking for)

- Long term partnerships are the most fruitful and can produce the greatest results for all parties.
- Community Based Participatory Research is an approach to research that may be harder to do but can yield important quality findings.
- As a researcher, being situated at a university that encourages community involvement and engagement is incredibly helpful.
- Successful partnerships have to be beneficial to all members of the partnership.
- This session demonstrated some of the variability in the types of research partnerships. However, all presenters stressed the importance of trust, respect, good communication, and mutual benefits as key to success.