Assessing Research-Practice Partnerships: Five Dimensions of Effectiveness

RPPs should assess the extent to which they are:

• building trust and cultivating partnership relationships.
• conducting and using rigorous research to address problems of practice.
• supporting educational partner organizations to achieve their local improvement goals.
• informing the work of others.
• increasing the capacity of participating researchers and practitioners to engage in partnership work.

What are indicators an RPP is building trust and cultivating partnership relationships?

• Researchers and practitioners within the partnership allocate time to work together regularly.
• The partnership establishes routines that promote collaborative decision-making.
• The perspectives and expertise of both researchers and practitioners are valued as essential to solving problems of practice.
• Researchers in the partnership take account of current systems, policies, and practices that impact the focus of the partnership work.

What are indicators an RPP is conducting and using rigorous research?

• The partnership develops systematic processes for collecting, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing data specific to the problem of practice in order to inform local decision-making.
• The partnership conducts initial studies to clarify and further specify the problem of practice addressed by the partnership.
• Partnership research attends to key aspects of the educational setting to explain variation in current outcomes.
• Partnership research uses multiple sources of evidence to support and qualify research claims, including the perspectives of key stakeholders in the partnership.
### Research-Practice Partnership Questions to Consider

#### Cultivate Partnership Relationships

| Before Initiating a RPP | • Do members of the potential partnership have a professional commitment to engage in collaborative inquiry with researchers and practitioners?  
|                         | • Is there a commitment to collaboration between partners and a plan that allocates time and resources for relationship building activities between partners? |
| Early Phase of a RPP    | • How will you assess the quality and health of partnership relationships?  
|                         | • What mechanisms or routines can be put into place to support the development of partnership norms that emphasize the value of diverse forms of expertise needed to solve complex problems?  
|                         | • What mechanisms or routines can be put into place to provide opportunities for members of the partnership to develop relationships through working together? |
| Throughout a RPP        | • How will the partnership address relationship concerns that arise?  
|                         | • How will the partnership handle changes in personnel over the course of the partnership?  
|                         | • How will the partnership re-negotiate goals, commitments, and partnership progress in an ongoing manner?  
|                         | • Who is bringing the energy to the partnership?  Who is initiating contact? |

#### Conduct and Use Rigorous Research

| Before Initiating a RPP | • Do the researchers have a professional commitment to support partner organizations’ improvement efforts as a primary goal?  
|                         | • Can the researchers prioritize and commit time and resources to support partner organizations’ improvement efforts? |
## Research-Practice Partnership Questions to Consider

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| • Has the partnership identified a specific strategy for improvement and developed a plan for evaluating the implementation strategy, once the problem is specified? | • Does the partnership collect data to determine how their work is improving organizational policies and processes that impact the problem of practice?  
• Does the partnership collect data to determine how their work is impacting the problem and reducing undesirable variation of implementation and outcomes? |

## Impact Local Improvement Efforts

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• Can the researchers prioritize and commit time and resources to support partner organizations' improvement efforts? | • Has the partnership identified a specific strategy for improvement and developed a plan for evaluating the implementation strategy, once the problem is specified? | • Does the partnership collect data to determine how their work is improving organizational policies and processes that impact the problem of practice?  
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## Inform the Work of Others

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| • What is the expectation that the partnership work will contribute to a larger knowledge base of effective approaches for addressing common problems of practice?  
• How will the partnership share information to relevant professional networks? | • Does the partnership have a research plan to develop new understandings relevant to the problem practice? | • Does the partnership share strategies for organizing partnership work within professional networks doing similar work?  
• Does the partnership share improvement strategies and results within professional networks of researchers and practitioners?  
• Is there evidence of others using tools or research based on the partnership's work? |

## Increase Capacity to Conduct Partnership Work

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| • Have any of the partners participated in a RPP before? Will researchers and practitioners engage in new and different roles from what is typical?  
• How will researchers and practitioners be supported to develop new skills? | • Are researchers and practitioners engaging in new and different roles from what is typical of researchers and practitioners?  
• How are these activities documented and how is progress assessed? | • Do researchers and practitioners report a strong identity and commitment to partnership work? |