

The Issue of Equity: Taking Research on Partnership Program Development to Scale in Practice.

Looking to the future, a very challenging topic in the U. S. and in other nations is the “scale-ability” of research-based (or evidence-based) results of partnership programs and practices. After more than three decades of studies by countless researchers that confirm the importance of school, family, and community partnerships for student success in school, it is imperative to translate research to good policy and useful practice so that more schools—indeed all schools—organize effective programs to engage parents, other family members, and community partners in ways that support student success in school.

There are opportunities in each nation to attain this imperative and there are challenges that limit progress. What have we learned about both opportunities and challenges to press forward so that schools develop and sustain goal-linked partnership programs to increase student achievement, good behavior, postsecondary planning, and other indicators of success? This question is at the heart of the equity issues discussed at ERNAPE-Lisboa.

This session had three parts: Presentation, Small Group Discussions, and Full Group Discussion.

In the presentation, I drew from my colleagues and my experiences to scale up the development of research-based partnership programs in schools and districts in the U. S. over the past 17 years (since 1996). There are important “lessons learned” in working with hundreds of schools and districts and in celebrating their successes and sustainable actions for strong, goal-linked partnership programs and studying the reasons for failures.

In the small group discussions, ERNAPE-Lisboa attendees discussed and charted ideas on the *opportunities* or *challenges* to advancing this agenda in their countries.

Some groups addressed such question as:

- What are the *opportunities* for applying results of research to improve schools’ programs and practices of partnerships?
- What are the *opportunities* for the “round trip” for practice to inform and promote new research on partnerships?
- Whose job is it to “scale up” the application of research-based approaches to partnership program development in practice so that all schools engage families in children’s education at school and/or at home, and so that all students benefit from family and community resources and support?
- How can this component of school improvement become the “new normal” in any nation (i.e., in your country) so that educators at all grade levels know that it is a professional responsibility to organize and continually improve connections with parents and other partners to support student success in school?

Other groups addressed such question as:

- What are major challenges that limit educators from scaling up partnership programs at all school levels (in your country)?
- Are there challenges to the conduct of research?
- To the translation of research to practice?
- To the preparation or professional development of educators to take responsibility for organizing and conducting partnership programs?
- Other major challenges to making progress on this agenda?
- What are potential solutions to one or more of the stated challenges?

THE ISSUE OF EQUITY

- Where (in your country) is there variation in readiness to think about whether and how to scale-up research-based partnership programs?

As a full group, reconvened, we discussed selected ideas from the small group discussions on the *challenges* and *opportunities* to scale up partnership programs in preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools.

We continued to collect ideas that were discussed in other sessions at ERNAPE-Lisboa on this issue of equity and scaling up partnership programs, from research to practice.

We will summarize all ideas that were collected and share these in a post-conference communication with all attendees. This shared-attention will provide a picture - in 2013 - of the opportunities and challenges that researchers and practitioners face in scaling up partnership programs to link research to practice, to identify topics for needed research, and to improve schools' outreach to engage families and community partners in order to increase student success in school.

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