RESEARCH + PRACTICE COLLABORATORY

What Teachers and Districts Most Need from Research and Researchers

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Who We Are

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## Who Are Practitioners, Anyway?

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Informal educators</td>
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<td>Youth development specialists</td>
<td>District curriculum specialists</td>
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<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Principal supervisors</td>
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<td>Parents</td>
<td>Museum education directors</td>
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<td>Peer leaders/explainers</td>
<td>Youth program managers</td>
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**Addendum:**

- Educators in informal education settings: (insert list here)
- Additional educational leaders: (insert list here)

**Note:** This list is not exhaustive and may vary based on specific contexts.

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The problems/needs of each of these practitioner roles vary greatly.

When communicating, recognize that what resonates with one might alienate another.
Know Your Audience

Example: Some considerations regarding assessment

• Central office
  ─ Resources for district-wide assessments

• Principal
  ─ School-wide performance

• Teacher
  ─ Individual student performance
Know Your Audience

What do you have to offer to meet practitioners’ needs?

• Curriculum?
• Professional Development?
• Assessment Tools?
• Program Evaluation?
Teachers Need Reliable Support

• Be realistic in how much support you can provide – be weary of overcommitting
  – Example: Co-planning instruction requires time, skill, and responsiveness to teacher scheduling

• Have a communication plan
  – Be timely in following up with teachers
  – Establish norms in your group for communicating with teachers – make it easy for teachers to work with you
Teachers Need Reliable Support

• The people (researchers, graduate researchers, etc.) providing on-the-ground support:
  – Know and can speak to teaching practices and working with a classroom of students
  – Are skilled in relationship-building
  – Can actually do the work with teachers – more than collecting / analyzing data, theorizing, connecting to research
Teachers Need “Your Thing” to Fit in Their World

• Initial Planning
  – What are the existing initiatives and demands on teachers’ professional time?
  – How did teachers receive and integrate the last big PD?
  – What improvement efforts are teachers already engaged in?
  – Include teachers in the planning team
Teachers Need “Your Thing” to Fit in Their World

• Ongoing
  – How will you systematically collect feedback from teachers? How will you include less formal feedback?
  – How will you demonstrably incorporate teacher feedback throughout the project?
  – If teachers are hesitant to buy-in to the project, don’t dismiss their concerns – there are probably problems in your design that will inhibit scaling
Be Conscious of How You Talk With Practitioners

• Minimize use of jargon
• Know that your position as a researcher carries a type of intellectual authority and power
• When talking about theory, recognize that it may not match up with practitioners’ well-developed theories based on their experience
1. Know your audience.
2. Be realistic in the time and expertise your team can contribute to on-the-ground teacher support.
3. Be cognizant of how your work fits into teachers’ unique context. Include teacher voice whenever possible.
4. Be conscious of how you talk with practitioners.