

IES Notes: October 2018

Matthew Soldner, NCEE Commissioner, shares some points about IES.

Components of IES National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE):

- Conducting rigorous evaluation of federal programs (e.g., Title 1, higher education training, how tax dollars are being used).
- Knowledge-use three parts:
 1. Regional Educational Laboratory Program (REL)
 2. What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)
 3. National Library of Education and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)

Internal validity was the main focus of NCEE but this is not enough anymore. Now the focus is on enhanced usability of everything IES is doing to ensure knowledge generation.

Standards for Excellence in Education Research: SEER

The WWC evidence standards are not changing. However, IES intends to add certification levels for the WWC based on the LEED green building certification system. To achieve the highest rating, studies will have to meet these domains:

6 Domains to Encourage

1. Study registry: All studies are required to be preregistered.
2. Meaningful outcomes: Researchers should measure what is studied.
3. Clarity of core components of intervention: Asking researchers to be clearer about core components of the intervention including the underlying theory of action. Distinguish what is different from “business as usual.”
4. Cost-effectiveness analysis: Can people afford to implement the intervention? Help people think more about cost.
5. Transferability: Is the study relevant?
6. Implementation: How can this be scaled in other contexts?

These threads will start appearing in RFAs. A plan is not in place at this time to associate the standards with the rating of proposals, but the question of “Will a project do these things well?” will be part of the review conversation.

Efficacy Trials and Scale Up

IES has funded many Goal 1 development projects that have not scaled to Goals 2 and 3. It is a priority to move studies into the field to be applied in real conditions. IES will increase attention on efficacy trials and scale up.

Learning How Classroom Teachers Access Information

IES is meeting with classroom teachers in focus groups across the nation. IES may find that teachers access their information mostly from informal peer-sharing or on Pinterest. Teacher preparation programs should help people think about the role of teachers in the classroom. Problems arise in classrooms that have to be solved. Evidence-based practices are not to scale yet. IES seeks to keep the best of what it has been doing and develop new resources by taking what is good and turning it into something teachers will use.

National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships (NNERPP)

RPPs are collaborations between education researchers and practitioners with the goals of producing more relevant research, improving the use of research evidence, and engaging researchers and practitioners to tackle problems of practice.

Over recent years, IES has made large investments in RPPs. The RPP idea is embedded in the REL program. IES is undertaking some efforts to develop measures around educator capacity and the emphasis is on the end goal of student outcomes.

Future Emphasis

IES is considering future emphasis. One might be “What can we do in teacher preparation to help preservice teachers think about the scientific process to develop solutions to problems in the classroom?” Partnerships with Colleges of Education can support this inquiry.

More actions are needed in the area of rigorous measurement and evaluation and asking questions like, “Did this measure cause change?” IES is considering how to shape measurement parameters and ways to build this into upcoming competitions.

IES will focus more on evaluating outcomes to improve student outcomes and to make a difference on the ground, so that every dollar invested makes a meaningful difference. Emphasis on outcomes is critical.

IES will continue to work on building IES champions in the Senate and bipartisan support in 2020.