Cross-sector partnerships are increasingly seen as an important strategy for achieving change and solving complex problems. Several fields have recognized the importance of partnerships including education, healthcare, business, non-profits, and government. As a result, it is important for evaluators to identify frameworks and tools that provide productive evaluative data that can be used to inform stakeholders in improving their initiatives and programming. Woodland and Hutton (2012) developed the Collaboration Evaluation and Improvement Framework (CEIF). The framework provides a multi-stage approach to evaluation cross-organizational collaborations.

The CEIF authors piloted the framework in their own evaluation work and subsequently used a tool included in framework to study teacher professional learning communities (Woodland, 2016). However, there appears to be relatively little published evaluation literature utilizing the framework. The current study will provide additional evidence regarding the effectiveness of the CEIF framework for evaluating cross-sector partnerships in the context of a multisite evaluation of a statewide K-12 STEM education improvement network. The CEIF framework was used to inform the identification of key partnerships that have been developed in the network. Two tools from the framework, the Team Collaboration Assessment Rubric (TCAR) and the Levels of Organization Integration Rubric (LOIR), are being used to collect survey data regarding the collaborative practices and the levels of integration associated with each of the partnerships in the study. Partnership leaders are also being interviewed regarding their experiences, the impacts of the partnership on STEM education in their region, and the strengths and challenges associated with the partnership. In addition, observations of partnership events/activities are being conducted using the TCAR to triangulate findings from the survey.

As a result, the presentation should be of interest to a wide audience of evaluators included those interested in multi-site evaluation, mixed-methods evaluation, and evaluation of partnership/collaboration. Despite the emerging importance of partnerships in a variety of fields, there remains relatively few published instruments and frameworks for evaluating partnerships. The transdisciplinary or cross-sector nature that partnerships often have can make them particularly difficult to evaluate. Providing additional empirical evidence to support the CEIF framework will provide a valuable resource.

References

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