

CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

13. Expand the types of research evidence used to inform practice and policy in education

Influential actors in education, across the realms of research, practice, policy, and funding, reinforce a [deeply held set of beliefs about evidence](#) that contribute to limiting the types of research knowledge that are funded, elevated, and used. These include limited definitions and misunderstandings about what constitutes [rigor](#), [relevance](#) and [legitimacy](#) in scholarship; problematic [assumptions](#) of researcher and methodological neutrality and [bias](#); the marginalization of certain scholars and scholarship in [publishing](#) and [other processes in academia](#); and misconceptions about the existence of a [single “correct” result](#) in research studies (see also [Silberzahn et al. 2018](#) and [Botvinik-Nezer et al. 2020](#)).

Understanding and addressing complex social issues like how structures shape student experience requires multiple disciplinary and methodological perspectives and diversity in both [participants](#) and [researchers](#).

National scientific bodies, including the recent National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [report](#) to the federal Institute of Education Sciences, have echoed long-standing calls by researchers for such work. Actors in the student experience field across research, practice, policy, and philanthropy are well poised to lead for this type of change.

Cultivate and cite a more diverse body of rigorous research evidence.

Learn and educate others about the value of different disciplinary and methodological perspectives to understand complex social phenomena. Seek out and cite rigorous research from multiple disciplines and methodologies in seeking to study, understand, and communicate about issues in education.

Shift individual and organizational messaging about what constitutes rigor and relevance in scholarship. Avoid signaling that research is “neutral” or “objective.” Acknowledge the limitations and biases in research while also emphasizing what research can contribute to our understanding, alongside the lived experience and expertise of students, families,

communities, educators, and other sources of important information.

Conduct, fund, cite, and advocate for rigorous studies that involve diverse disciplinary perspectives and methodologies, within both scholarly and education circles. This includes rigorous qualitative, mixed methods, and descriptive scholarship in addition to quantitative studies and experimental and quasi-experimental studies in particular.

Encourage federal funding for a more diverse body of evidence in education. Use financial and non-financial resources (e.g., voice, convening, organizing) to encourage federal funding of research that invests in bringing multiple methodological, theoretical, and disciplinary perspectives to bear in studying important topics in education.