

Symposium Title: Unpacking the Logic Model: A Discussion of Mediators and Antecedents of Educational Outcomes from the Investing in Innovation (i3) program

The Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) program aims to add to the evidence base of what works in educational interventions by funding projects that develop or expand and comprehensively study innovative practices designed to improve student achievement, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The i3 structure emphasizes both a rigorous impact evaluation on primary and exploratory outcomes as mapped out in an intervention's logic model, as well as an implementation study that assesses the degree to which an intervention was successfully (or unsuccessfully) implemented and the factors that contributed to fidelity. The proposed symposium aims to showcase findings from exploratory work completed from four i3-funded studies. The underlying goal of the symposium is to highlight the different ways in which exploratory work on the mechanisms (e.g., theoretical mediators or antecedents of behavior, implementation quality) driving program effectiveness and educational outcomes can provide useful information to practitioners and educators alike.

Paper 1: This paper presents findings from a RCT that assess the impact of a cross-age peer mentoring and high school transition program that aims to mitigate factors related to school dropout. Presenters (The Policy & Research Group and Center for Supportive Schools) will provide an interpretive discussion of the exploratory study findings on the program's impact on intermediate outcomes from the perspective of both the researcher and practitioner.

Paper 2: Empirical Education evaluated the effects of the Collaboration and Reflection to Enhance Atlanta Teacher Effectiveness (CREATE) teacher residency program on teacher social and emotional skills, retention, and teaching effectiveness by means of a longitudinal study that followed five consecutive cohorts for three years each. With a unique opportunity to explore impacts and differential impacts of CREATE both within the same cohort at different timepoints in the program, as well as across cohorts, presenters will map out results in the context of CREATE's logic model from short-term to distal outcomes.

Paper 3: This paper presents exploratory analyses from an RCT measuring the impacts of Enhanced Units (EU), which combines research-based content enhancement routines, collaboration strategies, and technology components for secondary history and biology classrooms to improve student content learning and higher-order reasoning for students with disabilities. Presenters will discuss questions raised after mixed confirmatory results and bring in context from the implementation study of the intervention.

Paper 4: Empirical Education will present findings from a cluster RCT that assessed the effects of a teacher professional development program that aimed to improve teacher content knowledge and student science achievement. Presenters will address questions related to the impact on intermediate outcomes (e.g., teacher beliefs and attitudes) and the extent to which results support and/or challenge the intervention's logic model.

Collectively, these four papers present discussions of research that aims to unpack a program's logic model and answer questions related to intermediate mechanisms that influence intervention outcomes. They aim to provide educators and practitioners with practical information about how an intervention works and under what conditions the intervention works most effectively.