



Program evaluation

Get the evidence and analysis you need to document results and drive continuous improvement



Non-profit education research, development, products, and services



Partner with McREL for thoughtful, responsive evaluations

Whether it's assessing the effectiveness of your program or identifying opportunities for improvement, we'll help you achieve your goals by providing data-based findings, objective conclusions, and sound recommendations.

Our program evaluators understand that education is a complex endeavor. We'll help you sort through the complexity and see how the pieces fit together, developing logic models and other frameworks, showing the results your efforts are likely to yield, and tracking and reporting those results. We'll help identify the critical success factors that can affect your project and suggest relevant strategies to implement for continuous improvement.



Standards expertise and customized services to help you achieve your goals

Our nationally recognized evaluators are highly trained, highly experienced, and solidly grounded in professional standards and best practices of evaluation. We'll create evaluation studies that are centered on your needs and questions, and designed to maximize the usefulness of the results to you and your stakeholders.

Our collaborative approach to evaluation includes helping you every step of the way, from developing a clear theory of action and setting solid goals to providing you with practitioner-friendly reports you can use to develop strategic plans.

We offer:

- Dataset management and analysis
- Descriptive studies
- External third-party reviews
- Experimental and quasi-experimental designs
- Instrument development and validation
- Literature reviews, research syntheses, and meta-analyses
- Needs assessments
- Outcome and impact studies
- Process and implementation studies
- Qualitative and quantitative methods

Experience with federal, state, and local project funders:

Our evaluators conduct exceptional work with an array of project funders, including the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Labor, the National Science Foundation, state departments of education, regional agencies, districts, schools, nonprofits, foundations, and private education companies and vendors.

Capacity and areas of service:

- Evaluating K–12 education policies, initiatives, and grant-funded programs
- Evaluating higher education projects and efforts, including career training programs
- Selecting, creating, and validating data-collection instruments
- Building capacity within organizations to conduct their own evaluations
- Evaluating effectiveness and outcomes of education products, services, and programs

Examples of work:



Science4Us product efficacy study

Science4Us turned to McREL for help in finding out if their early elementary science curriculum improved student achievement, increased teacher confidence to teach science, and motivated more students to engage in science. “McREL helped us narrow and focus our questions so we would get to what we most needed to know,” says Catherine Christopher, a Science4Us curriculum development content specialist. McREL’s small-scale study evaluated a two-week instructional module called “States of Matter” in the physical science unit. The study included independent classroom observations, teacher and student surveys, think alouds, interviews, and assessments. The results showed that Science4Us students outperformed students in traditional science instruction. The group of students who used Science4Us materials made statistically significant improvements on a content knowledge post-test when compared to peers who did not use Science4Us (researchers controlled for pre-test scores).



Evaluating federal TAACCCT grant programs for higher education

McREL serves as the external evaluator for multiple colleges that are implementing U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants. A few examples include the Advanced Manufacturing Education consortium led by Central Lakes College, the Casper College School of Health Science SIMLab project, the New River Community and Technical College’s Allied Health program, and the University of West Alabama’s Applied Manufacturing Technology Program. Although each TAACCCT evaluation is customized to meet the needs of the client, many of them include similar components, such as quasi-experimental designs, propensity score matching, tracking of progress (e.g., credits earned) and outcome indicators (e.g., employment and wage data) to assess the impact of the project. Most of the evaluations also include student surveys and focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and quantifying the extent to which the colleges implemented the programs they proposed with fidelity.



Measuring student perceptions for Expeditionary Learning

Using a whole-school, whole-child approach, Expeditionary Learning schools provide students with team-based, interdisciplinary “learning expeditions,” including fieldwork, case studies, projects, and service learning—all with an underlying focus on culture and character. McREL’s research and evaluation experts worked with Expeditionary Learning staff to revise and refine the organization’s theory of action components, focusing on those that were most important to the program and could be linked to existing education psychology concepts. Using extant, validated instruments as a starting point, McREL staff then created a student perception survey of the identified constructs.

Contact us today

We'll help you examine your goals and create a plan to assess your progress and measure outcomes.



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Visit McREL.org to learn about our solutions-driven services for research and evaluation, instruction, leadership, and school and systems improvement.



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