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LEARNER VARIABILITY PROJECT'S RESEARCH AGENDA

A Mosaic of Neuro-Affirming Environments:

How Educators and Systems are Centering Neurodiverse Learners

What is a Neuro-affirming Space?

A neuro-affirming space is one that recognizes neurological differences, such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia, as natural and valuable forms of human diversity rather than deficits to be cured or barriers to be overcome. This exploration will work to uncover what works, for whom it works, through what mechanisms, and under what conditions, particularly with a lens toward intersecting identities as a context for learning.



Points of exploration:

- What mechanisms and delivery features of inclusive practices are actually producing equitable outcomes for intersectionally marginalized learners?
- In these settings, how does the intersection of race, gender, and disability play a role in how educators or leaders support their neurodiverse learners?
- What are the cultural components, attitudes, or beliefs that cultivate neuro-affirmative pedagogy?
- What are the school-wide and systemic conditions that enable the implementation of inclusive frameworks?
- What are the person-centered, distal outcomes (i.e., belonging, mental health, self-determination) that these settings elicit?

Anticipated Methods



EXPLORATION

Conducting a landscape scan of settings identified to be inclusive and most affirming for neurodiverse learners.



PERSPECTIVE GATHERING

Exploring the perspectives of educators, leaders, families, and learners within those settings through semi-structured interviews, and semi-ethnographic observations.



REPLICATION

By synthesizing findings, we can support leaders and educators to foster neuro-affirming features and practices through ongoing support, training, and/or resources.

STORYTELLING

The stories that we uncover across this work will create a collection of sources of inspiration and practical application to widen the scope of neurodiverse students who benefit from these practices.



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