

Workshop on Education
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**What can we learn from Randomized Trials in Education?
A Look at the Past, Present, and Future**

Abstract: In the past 20 years, we have seen an increased emphasis in the use of randomized trials, and particularly cluster randomized trials, to test the efficacy of educational interventions. The most prominent funder of cluster randomized trials to assess the efficacy of educational interventions is the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the research branch of the U.S. Department of Education. Initially, the goal of these cluster randomized trials was to answer the *what works* question. For example, what math curriculum is most effective for improving math achievement? While this is still a primary goal of these studies, over time, the goals expanded beyond the question of *what works* to questions about *for whom* and *under what conditions*. These types of questions are critical in that they help provide a more comprehensive picture about the types of students and schools that the programs work best. This presentation examines how the design of IES funded cluster randomized trials have evolved over time in response to these expanded goals and the potential of the studies to provide rigorous evidence about *what works, for whom, and under what conditions*.