Community for Advancing Discovery Research in Education

Advice from CADRE Fellows Alumni

Fellowship Opportunities

- "Take advantage of all the webinars and colleagues that you can. You never know how a resource could be useful later down the road."
- "Listen to everything in your meetings and give every task your full attention. The Fellowship is an awesome opportunity to learn as well as make relevant contacts for your future. The more you put into it, the more you will get out it. It is absolutely worth it."
- "Take full advantage of the network that the Fellowship provides. Use it to inform and promote your research."
- "Stay in touch with your Fellows; work on expanding your professional network."
- "What you gain from the fellowship will be determined by the energy and enthusiasm you invest into the experience. If you are a graduate student, take detailed notes because much of what you learn may not be immediately applicable but will certainly be useful down the road."
- "There are multiple pathways for education researchers; it's worth considering them all. This is a really good time to think about what your future should look like."
- "What you gain from the fellowship will be determined by the energy and enthusiasm you invest into the experience."

Career Pathways

- "Keep an open mind and consider both academic and non-academic career paths. Inform yourself about the possibilities for professional growth and possible drawbacks in each path."
- "Academia is not the only path—there are plenty of great non-profit organizations/curriculum development projects/etc. that need great researchers and are willing to grant early researchers a great deal of responsibility in a way that (to my knowledge) isn't necessarily possible in academia. Definitely consider them as a career path."
- "If going into academia, write. Write. Write. It helps on multiple fronts. Apart from increasing your likelihood to publish, it helps with understanding the work you are doing and helps clarify future career steps."
- "Be flexible, be confident and follow the things you are really interested in."

Doctoral Programs and Dissertations

- "Schedule a good writing time that works for you. Start with 1 hour every day and increase that amount as you make progress on your dissertation. Use this time every week. Protect and value this time."
- "If you are a teaching assistant, go to "how-to-teach" seminars. They will help you become more comfortable with your teaching and you will probably learn new teaching techniques.

- “Take a grant writing course. It will be very beneficial, especially if you are planning on working in academia. “
- “Ask yourself: what can I realistically do in a semester?”
- “Remember, only you expect perfection. “
- “Perhaps the wisest academic decision you can make is to align your dissertation research with your DR K-12 project (assuming the funding lasts more or less until your expected graduation). This can speed up your time to degree, while contributing to the published output of the project team before and after your graduation. It is a win-win…unless you are too passionate about, or are too far along into research on a different topic, or believe that being solely responsible for all aspects of a research project is essential to authentic PhD training.”
- “Use your DR K-12 project to develop some specific competencies or gain experiences that you would really like or need to have, in order to end up with a well-rounded, comprehensive graduate training experience in your academic program. Examples include designing curriculum or some other intervention or research instrument, spending time in the field as part of data collection, coordinating research activities, or applying certain analytic methods or tools. This does not mean completely taking over a particular aspect of the project, but rather, intentionally rebalancing your duties or dividing the labor on the team in order to allocate relatively more time-on-task to it, thus becoming more deeply engaged with a part of the project that appeals as naturally more interesting, valuable, or fulfilling to you over a period of time.”
- “If you are a graduate student, take detailed notes because much of what you learn may not be immediately applicable but will certainly be useful down the road.”

Mentors

- “Find work that you find stimulating and interesting, where there is room for you to grow, and find a mentor in that area that can help you grow.”
- “Your mentors really do want you to succeed, so ask them lots of questions. In my experience, sitting in on discussions about grant decisions and asking my bosses about them later has been a real opportunity to learn more about a project and a good chance to get your foot in the door on something they may not know you’re interested in. Learning about the logistical aspects of research is just as important as the actual meat of the research, because research gets done in the real world of deadlines and constraints.”

Networking

- “Go to conferences if at all possible. You probably are already, but take advantage of them—they really are a good way to meet other people working in the discipline and to hear about the current work of the field.”
- “It is worthwhile to seek out researchers in different areas and specialties of STEM education research from yours because down the road you may need a new perspective on your work or need to collaborate in a new area.”

- "Engage in multiple professional learning communities, CADRE being one such community. You never know exactly how your career path will unfold, and what skills, tools, and connections you will need. Being a part of several groups and thus keeping your finger on the pulse of several sub-fields in your discipline allows you to remain flexible and open to new opportunities for professional growth, which is a must in the increasingly 'freelance' economy, including in the STEM fields (i.e., all fields)."
- "Networking can be challenging but is essential – do not hesitate to put yourself out there (with the caveat that you also don't want to overcommit yourself). Opportunities often come from the people you know."
- "This is a great opportunity to network with folks outside of your direct field - think about ways you might be able to collaborate across disciplines."
- "Network and build relationships with other fellows. Those relationships will be valuable in the future."
- "Reach out to interesting people in the field to learn about their work- don't be shy!"

Research and Scholarship

- "Do not take rejection personally. If your paper does not get accepted for a journal publication or a conference, find another journal, another conference, or resubmit to another journal. But never take rejection personally."
- "There are so many options for sharing your research findings that go beyond the 100-page report! Think creatively about how you can share your work so it will reach the audiences that need it most."
- "Think of your research as a two-way street with practice. Engage with practitioners when determining your research agendas and topics. Do research that the practitioner community will find useful."
- "Be sure to record everything you read in a centralized bibliography – pick software and use it consistently."
- "When in doubt about your writing, just get something down on paper - often getting thoughts down is enough to stimulate more thoughts. Also, it is easier to edit (what will never be perfect at the start anyway) than stare at a blank screen."
- "Participate in areas that are not your current field of focus; again, this could be vital to developing a broader scope of your work and ask questions!"
- "When working in the STEM fields, remember everything is interdisciplinary; it is easy to focus too deeply on your own research area. Attend seminars/colloquiums outside your main research area. You'd be surprised at how much you can learn. In the work we do, it is not uncommon for the next big idea for your project to come from outside your field. Adapting techniques other fields will keep you at the forefront of research and is part of the fun!"
- "Enjoy yourself. This seems simple, but it needs to be said. We will spend a significant amount of time working toward getting grants and other funding, running the project, writing up the data for publication, and attending to revisions. Before you're done with one project you will be

working on another. Frequently many more. It is a never-ending cycle. Don't forget to set aside time to remember what you enjoy about what you're doing."

- "Define your R&D focus…and stick to it! Publish! Build your network of other Early Career and Experienced Researchers."
- "Get on a NSF panel review as soon as possible because that experience will help you with writing your own proposals more than anything else."
- "Take the opportunity to think about research and/or development ideas beyond the scope of your own work because the CADRE group is great for cross-fertilization of ideas."
- "There are so many options for sharing your research findings that go beyond the 100-page report! Think creatively about how you can share your work so it will reach the audiences that need it most."
- "Think of your research as a two-way street with practice. Engage with practitioners when determining your research agendas and topics. Do research that the practitioner community will find useful."