

Causal Inference in Education Research Seminar Mission Statement and Guiding Principles for Participation

Mission Statement

The University of Michigan's Causal Inference in Education Research Seminar (CIERS) brings together and supports an interdisciplinary community of scholars interested in education-related topics. As a community, we value research that contributes to ongoing academic, policy, and practice conversations and view the seminar as a classroom that prepares its members for careers in research and policy. We welcome and provide constructive feedback at all stages of the research process, acknowledging that what constitutes value is not the same for every participant. By cultivating a welcoming and inclusive space, CIERS strives to build a diverse and supportive network of education scholars that extends beyond the University.

Guiding Principles

The following six guiding principles inform CIERS participation. We ask participants to keep them in mind during all CIERS-related interactions, and to work to follow the specific guidelines set out for overall, audience member, and presenter behavior.

1. Respect others.

- a. Be kind, respectful, and helpful in all interactions.
- b. As an audience member, phrase your comments from a place of curiosity, interest, and respect for the expertise of the presenter. Give the presenter your full attention, allowing the presenter to maintain control of the room.
- c. As a presenter, assume the audience provides feedback with good intentions. Treat all questions and comments with equal respect.

2. Maintain self-awareness: reflect on how others may perceive your behavior and intentions.

- a. Keep in mind how your behavior may be perceived by or affect others, how it reflects on you, and how it reflects on the CIERS community.
- b. As an audience member, consider the intended goal of your question before you ask it and whether it is best asked during or after the seminar. Be cognizant of how much you are speaking and whether you're allowing other voices to be heard.
- c. As a presenter, be open to feedback and respond in a respectful, rather than defensive, tone.

3. Use inclusive and intentional language.

- a. Our desire to understand and improve students' educational experience anchors everything we do. Use appropriate and inclusive examples and be mindful that different measures of student characteristics are not interchangeable (e.g. gender & sex, race & class, achievement & ability).
- b. As an audience member, phrase questions and feedback using appropriate language that respects the presenter, the audience members, and the people that we study.
- c. As a presenter, remember that our research involves people, not just data. Our quantitative data is limited and insufficient at capturing individual characteristics such as gender identity, racial identity, SES, and disadvantage. Be mindful of the use of strengths vs. deficit-based framing.

4. Embrace intellectual diversity and develop an inclusive and collaborative community.

- a. Embrace the diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, disciplinary approaches, expertise, and aspirations that our group represents and the strength that this diversity brings. Invite and encourage potentially interested parties to attend and welcome new attendees.
- b. As an audience member, keep in mind that presenters come from a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Actively consider potential implicit biases that may be affecting your interactions with presenters.
- c. As a presenter, ensure your presentation is accessible to audience members from a variety of experiences, disciplines, and levels of scholarly development.

5. Support individual goals.

- a. Presenter goals for both project feedback and professional development may vary, and it is our job as a community to respect and support those objectives.
- b. As an audience member, work to achieve the objectives of the presenter rather than the objectives you think the presenter should have.
- c. As a presenter, come into the presentation with goals, and invite the audience to help you meet them. Articulate purposes and desired feedback clearly and early.

6. Be mindful of the educational purpose.

- a. Recognize that everyone is at a different stage in their methodological training and professional development. Keep in mind that not knowing something or being wrong is an inevitable and important part of the learning process.
- b. As an audience member, actively foster a culture where mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. Use comments and feedback as teaching opportunities to offer constructive suggestions to improve the research, rather than to tear down the researcher.
- c. As a presenter, take the opportunity to share your expertise with the CIERS community. Be open to learning from the variety of perspectives in the room that can provide feedback on all aspects of a project.

Rules for Participation

Note: The following rules will be enforced by CIERS coordinators, and other participants should feel comfortable enforcing them as well.

1. CIERS is an electronics-free zone. Please keep your phones and devices in your bags.
2. No questions or comments from the audience for the first 10 minutes.
3. After 10 minutes, please raise your hand to speak and wait to be called on. This applies even if you are asking a follow-up or responding to other audience members.
4. Maintain focus on the presentation at all times. Do not start any side-conversations.