

LAURA GREENE KNAPP

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HUMAN CENTERED EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Improve Education Equity & Access | Positively Impact Education Systems

Accomplished leader skilled in managing multimillion dollar projects, leading teams, and using data to inform policy and practice. Expert in organizational leadership and applying research to develop actionable strategies. Lead cross-functional teams through coaching and mentoring to boost performance and growth. Dedicated to providing access to education and resources for individual development. Published author with experience presenting to clients and large audiences.

Core Competencies:

- Project and Talent Management
- Client Relationship Development
- Education Research
- Program Evaluation
- Quality Assurance
- Technical Writing
- Technical Assistance
- Organization Design
- Public Speaking

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

RTI INTERNATIONAL, Research Triangle Park, NC

Senior Director, Center for Education Evaluation and Research

2022 to 2025

Directed research, evaluation, and technical assistance activities with a team of over 60 staff. Managed business development, quality control, client relationships, fiscal oversight, and staff development. Led large-scale research and evaluation projects for federal and non-federal clients, focusing on education opportunity, competency-based education, secondary-to-postsecondary transitions, college and career preparedness, and education and the workforce.

- Increased staff 30% in 4 years through growth in business and expansion of work.
- Directed business development efforts that multiplied revenue through increased number and diversity of projects and clients.
- Oversaw reorganization of managers and staff within the Center, enhancing efficiency and talent development.
- Built relationships with federal and state agencies, non-profits, foundations, and schools that led to repeat business.
- Ensured high quality work within budget, leading to almost perfect client satisfaction.
- Applied research findings through technical assistance and professional development, which improved education policy and practice.
- Presented at 5 conferences and client groups to share research findings with educators and policymakers.

Director, Center for Research, Evaluation and Equity in Education

2019 to 2022

Directed research, evaluation, and technical assistance activities of 45 staff. Developed business development strategies and processes to identify, assess, and pursue new opportunities. Mentored staff in proposal development. Led multimillion-dollar research and evaluation projects for federal and non-federal clients.

- Implemented business development strategies and facilitated staff training, resulting in increased client and project numbers and diversity. Achieved 66% proposal win rate, double the industry standard.
- Trained and developed 19 new proposal leaders, expanding the organization's capacity to win new clients and projects.
- Presented research findings at 7 conferences and client board meetings.

Director, Center for Evaluation and the Study of Educational Equity

2016 to 2019

Directed research, evaluation, and technical assistance activities of 22 staff focused primarily on equitable education opportunities for students at all education levels. Led research and evaluation projects for federal and non-federal clients.

- Centralized business development efforts to increase efficiency and productivity.
- Participated in reorganization of education research functional areas.
- Published a book and 2 articles as well as presented research findings at 5 conferences.

Senior Research Education Analyst

2004 to 2016

Led multimillion-dollar research and evaluation projects for federal and non-federal clients, including education opportunity, secondary to postsecondary transitions, trends in education financing, and career and technical education.

- Built trusting client relationships and fostered cohesive, high-quality project teams that produced actionable research and evaluation findings.

- Published 38 technical reports and presented at 13 conferences, sharing research findings with educators and policymakers to improve education systems.

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

INDEPENDENT EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSULTANT, North Carolina

Provided data analysis, reporting, strategic consulting, and technical assistance to 12 associations, agencies, companies, and universities. Selected consultant engagements include:

North Carolina Association of Colleges and Universities, Burlington, NC

- Initiated and annually published Benchmarks: Student Aid in North Carolina, an analysis of financial aid trends.
- Authored "Financing Student Access to Higher Education: An Investment in North Carolina's Economic Future" and contributed research / editorial support to a strategic publication on higher education issues in North Carolina.

Caliber Associates, Inc., Fairfax, VA

- Authored "Cultural Barriers to Incurring Debt: An Exploration of Borrowing and Its Impact on Access to Postsecondary Education," a research report examining financial behaviors and educational access.
- Contributed to national evaluation of Drug-Free Communities program, supporting data analysis, reporting, and program impact assessment.

North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority, Research Triangle Park, NC

- Conducted annual analysis of higher education affordability in North Carolina, informing statewide policy and financial aid strategy.

Office of Student Financial Aid & Office of Institutional Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

- Led statistical analysis projects and authored reports to support institutional planning and student financial aid decision making.

RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC

- Developed and authored US Department of Education Tab Reports for public release of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data.

EDUCATION / CERTIFICATION

- **Master of Arts (MA)**, Economics, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC
- **Bachelor of Science (BS)**, Economics and Business Administration, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC
- Critical Friends Group, Certified Facilitator

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Knapp, L. G. (2024). Personalized learning: Enhancing student learning with voice and collaboration. Aurora Institute Symposium, New Orleans, LA.
- Knapp, L. G., & Siler, K. M. (2024). On a CBE island on your own? How can we build momentum and get others to join in the work that matters most for students? Aurora Institute Symposium, New Orleans, LA.
- Knapp, L. G., & McKenzie, D. (2020, Oct). Advancing equity through social emotional learning and competency-based education. Presented at the Aurora Institute Symposium Virtual Conference.
- Knapp, L.G., Johnson, K., Cheek, A., & Brown, D. (2020, Sep). Lessons from COVID-19: How competency-based education provided for continuity of learning in three North Carolina schools. Presented at the Aurora Institute Symposium Virtual Preconference Sessions.
- Knapp, L., & Quick, A. (2020, Jun 16). Advancing collaboration and competency-based education during COVID-19. Insights [blog]. RTI International. <https://www.rti.org/insights/advancing-collaboration-and-competency-based-education-during-covid-19>
- Knapp, L. G. & Siler, K. (2019, Nov). Student empowerment with competency-based education. Presented at the 2019 Learn Southeast Conference, Atlanta, GA. Invited Speaker.
- Knapp, L. G., Barbour, L., Braaten, E., Meyer, M., & Winzler, A. (2019, Oct). Designing and implementing statewide CBE efforts across education levels. Presented at the Competency-Based Education Network Annual Conference, Palm Springs, CA.

Selected RTI Project Experience

Regional Education Laboratory Southeast (2017 to 2025)—*Project Director*. For Florida State University, led a North Carolina Competency-Based Education Partnership. Partnership activities focused on developing and sharing resources on best practices for implementing competency-based education models at the K–12 level as well as intensive coaching for teachers and school leaders, primarily at the high school level on components of competency-based education, such as standards-based grading, social-emotional learning, strategic planning, and assessing progress.

Data Analysis and Quality Assurance Support (DAQAS III) (2023 to date)—*Project Director*. Led technical support activities for the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of the Chief Data Officer including internal and external analyses, reports, and digital products pertaining to education, including preschool through grade 12, postsecondary, and adult and career education.

Georgia Department of Education (2020 to 2025)—*Project Director*. Led evaluation activities for the Georgia Department of Education’s ReStart: Embrace, Engage, Expand, and Enhance Learning with Technology Initiative whose goals include building human and organizational infrastructure for personalized learning and establishing technology infrastructure for expansion of personalized learning.

Validate and Report on Communities in Schools of North Carolina Network Data (2013 to 2024)—*Project Director*. For Communities in Schools of North Carolina, directed efforts to review and evaluate network data, providing annual reports of data quality and progress of local affiliates toward personalized programming for students in areas of attendance, behavior, coursework, and family engagement.

Evaluation of Jobs for North Carolina Graduates (2019 to 2020)—*Project Director*. For Communities in Schools of North Carolina, directed evaluation of the Jobs for North Carolina Graduates program funded by the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

Implementing Project-Based Inquiry Global (2019 to 2021)—*Project Director*. For North Carolina State University College of Education, served as external evaluator for a National Science Foundation DRK-12 grant to implement project-based inquiry curriculum in two North Carolina middle schools.

Evaluation of Jobs for North Carolina Graduates (2019 to 2020)—*Project Director*. For Communities in Schools of North Carolina, directed evaluation of the Jobs for North Carolina Graduates program funded by the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

Developing a Simulated School for North Carolina State University Masters of School Administration (2018)—*Project Director*. For North Carolina State University, created a simulated, standardized web-based school tool to be used across courses that all Masters of School Administration students and faculty engage with during a student’s first year in the program.

Develop Evaluation Plan for North Carolina Innovation School District (2017 to 2018)—*Project Director*. For the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, participated in developing an evaluation plan for the North Carolina Innovation School District as they selected schools for participation and began operation.

2008/18 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:08/18)—Third Follow-Up (2016 to 2018)—*Teaching Content Expert*. Sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics, this study surveys approximately 18,500 bachelor’s degree recipients approximately 10 years after graduation. The study provides information on additional education and training, employment and workforce activities, and life experiences of bachelor’s degree recipients. Data were collected from sample members using a multimode survey. Oversaw teaching section quality.

Summative Evaluation of the Deeper Learning Strategy (2015 to 2017)—*Project Director*. For the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, conducted a summative evaluation that assessed the progress toward deeper learning goals, examined how the Foundation’s efforts were contributing to those goals, and examined evidence regarding the Foundation’s strategic assumptions.

First in the World Development Grant (2014 to 2018)—*Project Director*. For Southern New Hampshire University, oversaw evaluation of College for America’s newly developed academic support curriculum that supports students within the competency-based online degree program. This randomized controlled trial evaluated whether the new curriculum helps students remain enrolled and speeds degree completion.

Evaluation of the Innovation Lab Network (2014 to 2016)—*Project Director*. For the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, directed a developmental evaluation of the Foundation-supported state-based initiative, the Innovation Lab Network (ILN), whose goal was to advance education reform toward implementing deeper learning approaches in schools. Project activities assessed the ILN's progress, established metrics for measurement of progress, and tracked the progress of the ILN's activities over the course of the study.

Evaluation of State Level Support for Performance Assessments (2014 to 2015)—*Project Director*. For the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, directed evaluation activities of the four organizations that have supported states in developing and adopting performance assessments that measure “deeper learning” outcomes.

Analysis Support for the Federal TRIO Programs (2012 to 2018)—*Senior Advisor*. For the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Federal TRIO Programs, Office of Postsecondary Education, provided analytical support and reporting on the federal TRIO programs using project- and participant-level performance report data.

National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE) (2012 to 2017)—*Project Director*. For the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, directed the National Center for Innovation in Career and Technical Education, whose goal was to perform scientifically based research and evaluation; disseminate information; and conduct training to expand understanding, increase the effectiveness, and improve the implementation of career and technical education.

Technical Assistance and Support to GEAR UP Grantees (PPSS) (2011 to 2013)—*Project Director*. The purpose of this project was to help GEAR UP grantees access and use long-term student data to enhance their projects. Achieving this goal involved various activities that required a deep understanding of GEAR UP, experience with effective technical support strategies, knowledge of longitudinal data systems, and careful project management.

Analytic, Evaluation, and Policy Support (AEPS) for the Program and Policy Studies Service (2006 to 2012)—*Project Director*. This task order contract comprised 18 tasks and involved collaboration with 11 subcontractors. Its objective was to support PPSS by conducting secondary analyses of government performance reports and existing data sources, identifying and examining promising practices, preparing issue briefs and commissioning papers on national priority topics, delivering quick-turnaround data analyses, coordinating logistics for meetings of expert researchers and practitioners, and formulating recommendations for program improvement. The RTI team performed comprehensive secondary analyses utilizing various databases to evaluate information, generate tables, and produce reports presenting key findings. Information gathering was conducted through rigorous literature reviews, website research, site visits, and focus groups, which informed the development of issue briefs addressing topics relevant to promising practices within designated priority areas. The substantive areas of study included dropout prevention and recovery, career and technical education, secondary-to-postsecondary transitions, college and career readiness, student financial aid, federal programs supporting at-risk youth such as TRIO and GEAR UP, issues facing English-language learners, and federal programs governed by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Analysis Support for the Federal TRIO Programs (2004 to 2008)—*Project Director*. Provided analytical support and reporting for the U.S. Department of Education’s Federal TRIO Programs, using project and participant performance data from Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, and Veterans Upward Bound.