Measuring and Assessing the Use of Evidence

#LiveAtUrban
Housekeeping

• Event is being recorded and the recording will be posted online afterward.

• Hide captions or adjust settings with the Live Transcript button.

• Speaker biographies and slides are available online at Urban.org.

• All participants are muted.

• Type your questions and comments into the Q&A box at any time.

• Please complete the survey at the end of the event.

#LiveAtUrban
Measuring and Assessing the Use of Evidence

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Using Evidence

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What we do …

Transforming Evidence is a community which gathers individuals and organisations from many disciplines and sectors to understand how evidence is generated, shared and used.
Studying evidence: What do we call it?

How evidence influences policy and practice has captured our attention, cutting across disciplines and policy/practice domains.
Research agenda

To transform how we think about what evidence is, how to generate it, and how to use it well, we must better capture lessons being learned in our different research and practice communities.

**Understand evidence production**
- Creating and curating useful evidence base
- Skills and workforce, diversity and inclusivity
- Documenting funding flows

**Understand evidence use**
- Describing and documenting what ‘use’ we want to see
- Describing what researchers do and why
- Understanding what users do, how and why
- Documenting impact

**Improve evidence use**
- What have we tried? (Interventions, strategies, structures, data)
- Develop methods to empirically investigate these
- Bring critical perspectives to bear on these studies
- Evaluate changes to social outcomes
What do we mean by use of evidence?

- Knowledge-driven (instrumental)
- Problem-solving
- Political
- Tactical
- Interactive
- Enlightenment

… (research as intellectual enterprise)

Weiss (1979)
What do we mean by use of evidence?

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Research provides a ‘library’ of information, of which policy makers will tap when making decisions.

Underlying theory behind many calls for ‘evidence based policy’

Weiss (1979)
What do we mean by use of evidence?

- Knowledge-driven (instrumental)
- Problem-solving
- **Political**
- **Tactical**
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Research as ‘ammunition’ to support predetermined positions, or to delay decisions

Weiss (1979)
What do we mean by use of evidence?

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Weiss (1979)

Research provides new insights, new questions, and new ways of conceptualising the world.

Research and policy making take place alongside other social processes.
Frameworks are like toothbrushes.

http://ktddr.org/ktlibrary/articles_pubs/ktmodels/figures1-6.html

Graham 2006

Stetler 2003
What do we mean by use of evidence?
What do we mean by use of evidence?
What do we mean by use of evidence?
When is evidence use ‘good’?

Lots of focus on making evidence ‘good’… (relevance, rigour)

Less attention on understanding what good use is

- Understanding problems in the round
- Diverse and appropriate evidence base
- Thoughtful engagement and implementation, supported by three individual enabling components (skillsets, mindsets and relationships)
- Organisational enabling components (leadership, culture and infrastructure), as well as system-level influences.
So our solutions to improve evidence use…
Thank you

Transforming Evidence (transforming-evidence.org)
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Going beyond the citation: Capturing Evidence Use

Lauren H. Supplee
William T. Grant Foundation
Why does it matter?

Create evidence → USE evidence → Achieve mission; Improve Outcomes

Who is using our evidence? How are they using our evidence? When are they using our evidence?
Brainstorm:

How would you know *whether* and *how* research was used?
Methods and Measures
Continuum of Measures

How much do we believe the results?

Survey  Interviews  Observation  Document analysis

How much does it take to gather the data?
Studying the Use of Research Evidence: A Review of Methods
(wtgrantfoundation.org)
Welcome

The Use of Research Evidence (URE) Repository of Methods is an open resource for the URE community to share and learn about research methods used to understand and improve the use of evidence in policy and practice. It strives to be a site of collaboration where researchers can share and build upon the work of others in the community, and is being developed at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education, generously supported by the William T. Grant Foundation.

This companion site serves as a comprehensive guide and a resource hub for URE researchers interested in participating in this collaborative initiative. We welcome you to explore it as well as the actual repository itself, which is housed in the URE Collection on the Open Science Framework (OSF). You can also search and preview its most recent entries at the bottom of this page.
Surveys

- Goal
- Items
- Timing
## Legislators Use of Research

In the past 3 months, when doing the following activities, how often have you used research to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not at all (1)</th>
<th>Rarely (2)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3)</th>
<th>Often (4)</th>
<th>All the time (5)</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set a policy agenda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a policy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider policy implementation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand how to think about an issue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide about content or direction of a policy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuade others to a point of view or course of action</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet an expectation or requirement for using research</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviews

- Goal
- Respondents
- Timing
- Interpretation
Interviews

Researchers typically collect new data in Wisconsin [Indiana] and other states to investigate a range of questions such as

- *what* factors contribute to social and economic problems,
- *which* new issues are emerging,
- *how* policies can address issues and problems,
- *what* the effects of policies are,
- *why* these effects occur, and so forth.

Findings are made public only after the methods and analysis are reviewed by other researchers. You might hear research findings in presentations, testimony, or media reports, or read about them in policy briefs, books, or articles.

14. Can you describe an example or a situation of where you used or others used research to make a decision or to influence the decisions of your colleagues?

15. What specific information or contribution(s) did the research provide?

16. What was it about the research that made it useful?

17. For your example, was there a point in the policy process during which you found research to be most useful? If so, was it earlier, later, or in the middle?

18. Where did the research come from?

19. Why did you consider the source credible?
Document Analysis

Focuses on analyzing text to determine explanations and processes that occur over time.

Documents may include: memos, emails, meeting minutes, administrative materials, and other informal sources.
How would you mix and match? How do methods intersect?

- Surveys?
- Interviews?
- Document Analysis?
- Observations?
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