

Introduction to Methods for Assessing the Use of Research Evidence in Policy and Practice

Wednesday, March 11, 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Primary Contact: Kim DuMont, William T. Grant Foundation (kdumont@wtgrantfdn.org)

Presenters:

- Drew Gitomer, Rutgers University
- Kristen Davidson, University of Colorado Boulder
- Alan Daly, University of California, Santa Barbara
- Kara Finnigan, University of Rochester
- Liz Farley-Ripple, University of Delaware
- Henry May, University of Delaware

Do you wonder whether the results from an evaluation study that you contracted or conducted were used after the study ended? Who accessed the findings, with whom were the findings shared, and did the use of the evidence shift practices? Or perhaps you want to know whether using knowledge that comes from decades of research leads to beneficial policies, improved instructional practices, or more equitable student outcomes? If any of these questions are of interest to you, please join us for an up-close look at some of the methods scholars have used to assess the use of research evidence in policy and practice.

This workshop will draw on examples from research on research use and Drew Gitomer's recent review of methods for studying the use of research evidence. We will begin with an introduction to different uses of research evidence, a discussion of why research use is difficult to study, and some of the methods researchers have used to approach this challenging problem space. One set of presenters will demonstrate how they applied social network analysis to examine how research moves and stalls in school districts. and share details about the attributes of social networks that matter for research use. Another set of presenters will share protocols for assessing research through observations, helping participants understand what research looks like and sounds like in meetings. A third set of presenters will discuss different instruments to survey individuals who occupy different roles within schools and districts.

These measures aim to assess when, how, to what extent, and for what purpose research evidence is used. Each presenter will draw on past and current work to demonstrate these various approaches for assessing the use of research evidence. We will end with a discussion about which methods are best suited for which questions.

Workshop materials will be delivered through presentations and interactive activities to engage with the protocols or instruments. Questions and answers will be welcome throughout.