

EPPI-Centre Evidence Tools, Products, and Projects

A series of webisodes from the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating (EPPI) Centre

Hosted by AIR's Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (KTDRR)



Research Use Toolkit

Building a Resource to enable Researchers to Plan, Capture and Evaluate the Non-Academic Impact of Research

February 2018

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Use of Research to inform Policy and Practice

- Widely understood that rigorous research evidence should inform public decision-making
- Academics want to demonstrate the influence of their work on policy and society (Incentivised by HE funding, grant proposals, or more general validation of worth of research)

So what is the problem?

Academic research is still **underused** in policy processes!

- Recent report on the [Role of Research in UK Parliament](#) by Dr Caroline Kenny revealed that the higher education sector was poorly represented as providing sources of evidence to Select Committees:

Figure 2a: Sources of research submitted as written evidence to CLG Select Committee (%)

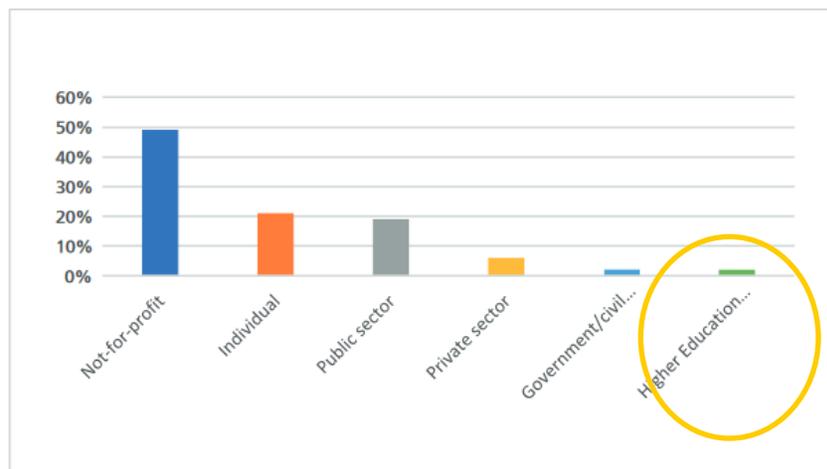
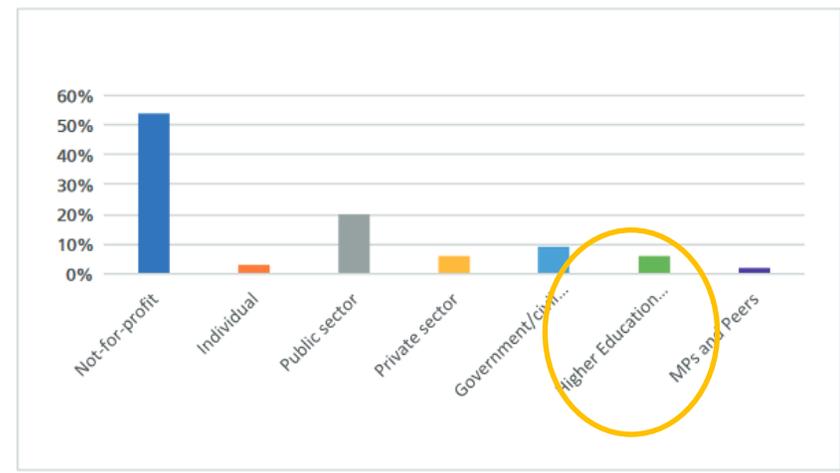


Figure 2b: Sources of research given as oral evidence to the CLG Select Committee (%)



- There is little shared understanding about **research-to-use processes**. There are lots of guides and resources for academics but these can be overwhelming.

Source: Kenny, C., Rose, D.C., Hobbs, A. A., Tyler, C. & Blackstock, J. (2017) *The Role of Research in the UK Parliament Volume One*. London, UK, Houses of Parliament. p.33. Contains Parliamentary information licensed under the [Open Parliament Licence v3.0](#).

What can we do about it?

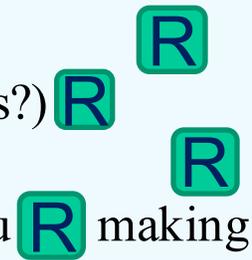
We set out to build a digital toolkit to guide academics through the process of optimising research use. We proposed that it would:

- Be conceptually and empirically-informed (using findings of *The Science of Using Science* (SoUS)) (Langer et al. 2016).
- Draw together other resources and guides to enhance capacity among researchers to identify, plan, monitor and capture impact
- Enable fuller use of research in real world decision-making

The Toolkit: a logical sequence



1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION - (Research title, current stage of progress, etc.)
2. 'RESEARCH USE' AIMS (how do you want the research to be used?)
3. ACTIVITIES (what are you planning to do to achieve these aims?)
4. MONITORING (how will you monitor your undertaking of these plans?)
5. EVALUATING (how will you assess the success of these plans?)
6. EVIDENCE CLAIMS (what is the basis of the evidence claim that you are making about the research findings?)



Resources



‘Research use’ Aims

We presented the aims (or effects) of research use as 3 different but related types:

INFORMED OF RESEARCH - (Type 1) research effects

To ensure people or organisations are informed about the research so that they can make use of it if required in any decision making.

USE IN DEBATES AND DECISIONS (Type 2) effects

To ensure that people or organisations consider the research in relevant decisions. As there are often many factors apart from research that influence how decisions are made, the effect of research on decision making may not necessarily be visible in the decision that is made.

IMPACT OF RESEARCH ON SOCIETY (Type 3) effects

In some cases, research may be engaged with and have a visible effect on decision making and in addition have an effect on the real world. For example, research findings may lead to the introduction of a new way of teaching mathematics (creating a change in policy or practice) and the maths scores of students then increase (leading to a consequence / change in outcome).

Achieving the aims

The toolkit follows a consistent logic.

It prompts the user to identify barriers to achieving the different aims, the activities that will help achieve these aims, and the ways in which the success of these aims will be measured.

Target: Who or what do you want to know about the research? Are these: individuals; organisations; local bodies; national bodies; or international bodies?

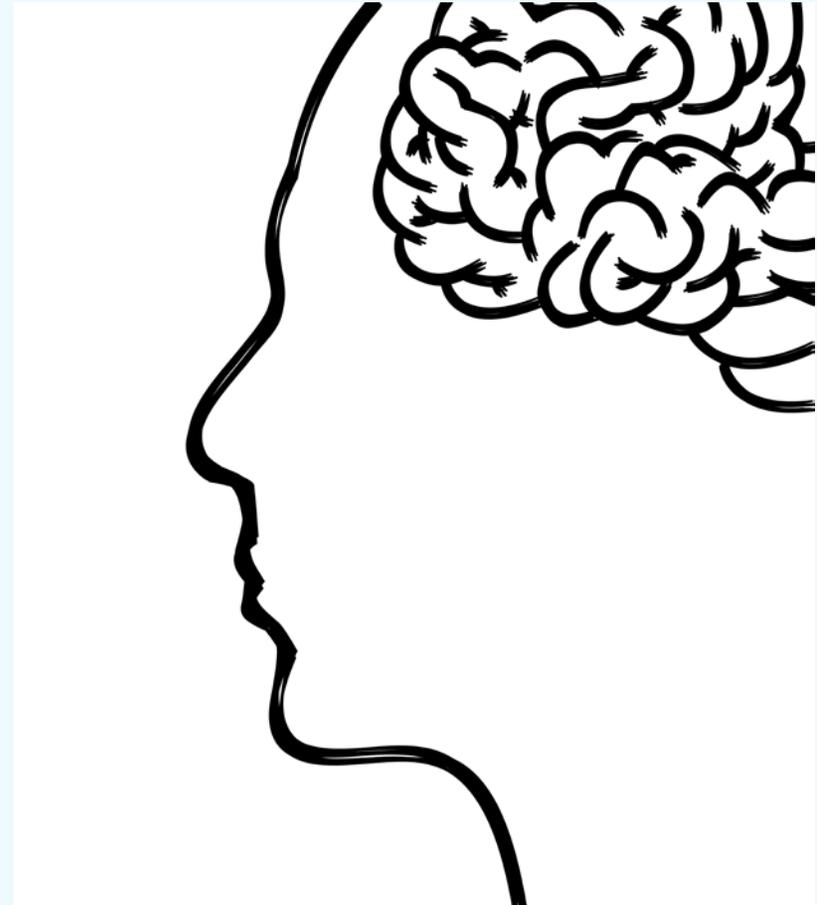
Schools, Teacher organisations

Challenges: Are there any barriers that you may need to overcome to achieve these aims? For example, political, values, or resource barriers.

Teachers are unlikely to have a lot of free time or energy - need to reduce burden.

Rather than leaving it to chance...

- Effectively the toolkit is trying to change the way that researchers think about research-to-use processes.
- It encourages careful planning, consideration of the challenges in achieving influence/ impact and critical reflection
- Ultimately it could also affect the way that research is produced.



Source: <https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1376480>
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Piloting!

This is a work in progress. The toolkit is still in development...

Please e-mail sarah.lester@ucl.ac.uk for more information on piloting.

Thank you



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With thanks to David Gough, Jan Tripney and
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Disclaimer

The contents of this presentation were developed by the EPPI-Centre for grant number 90DP0027 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.