Background Information on Knowledge Mobilization

Knowledge Networks

The Knowledge Network for Student Well-Being is part of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research (KNAER - http://www.knaer-recrae.ca/). These networks bring people and organizations together to address issues in education through "state-of-the-art knowledge" (pp.ii)[i]. This summary gives a brief overview of knowledge mobilization (KM) as understood by KNAER.

Everyone Does Knowledge Mobilization

Knowledge mobilization, simply put, is the connection of two processes: the creation of knowledge and the sharing of knowledge. Sharing knowledge is something that people do in their daily lives - from storytelling to teaching. People strive to find ways to share what they know with others.

Sharing knowledge is often a hard process. Knowledge is personal. For instance, two people who take the same class may create different knowledges based on their own past experiences and their understanding of the world. Thus, moving knowledge from a person into a different context is a complex process.

Difficulties with moving knowledge have created many theories within research and communities. These theories address what knowledge is and how it is shared. Knowledge mobilization is the name under which these theories live.

What is Knowledge?

Knowledge, in the past, has been viewed as coming from research. KNAER notes that knowledge is a complex process that comes from many spaces. Thus, experiences from practice and communities are also viewed as forms of knowledge. As well, KNAER believes knowledge must recognize local context.

Some Knowledge Mobilization Definitions

Knowledge mobilization (KM) is an umbrella term, a broad category that contains different definitions and processes. Below are three ways to understand KM. One is a

broad definition and the other two are from funders. Each definition has an example of KM that has occurred in Ontario schools.

1. Community: the process of moving knowledge, in a useful format, to people who can use the knowledge, at a time where it can make a difference.[ii]
   Example. Community concerns about the number of racialized students moved out of the main classroom due to learning issues. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) assessed these concerns. The assessment found the concerns were true. These findings pushed the TDSB to agree to exploring policy reforms related to this issue.[iii]

2. KNAER: KM is a process of knowledge about community's concerns flowing to researchers, then a collaborative project between researchers and communities, before knowledge flows to some or all: communities, practitioners, and policy makers.[iv]
   Example. KNAER funded 44 programs that fall into four categories in their 1st phase. One category was *Building or Extending Networks*. These projects brought people together. All group members were concerned about the same topic. Together they found research and created ways to share it. Finally, they made plans to push knowledge out. [i]

3. Ministry of Education: Focus on evidence-based decision making. This means knowledge must be supported by research. Thus, choices made about the education system are made based on research evidence.[v]
   Example. Research findings suggested that grade repetition did not help students over the long term. These findings resulted in the Ontario Government creating a new policy that restricted or removed grade repetition.[vi]

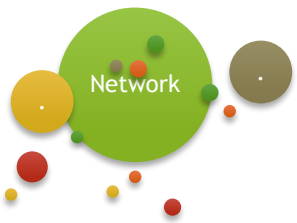
Other examples of KM in schools are the introduction of research brokering networks to school districts[vii] and principals becoming leaders to bring evidence-based practices into their schools.[viii]

Knowledge Mobilization Models

There are three main models of knowledge mobilization. They are linear, relationship, and systems.

1. Linear models of KM are a one-way process. Knowledge is created and then shared with others. This model of KM relies on the expert to create new knowledge.
   Example. When a doctor gives a patient information on a medical condition.

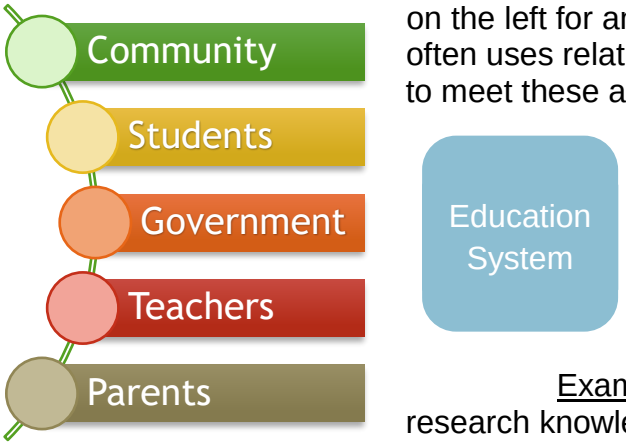
2. Relationship models of KM expand on the linear model. This model builds and improves links between people and organizations. Thus, knowledge must be allowed to move in more than one direction. For instance, teachers will tell



researchers the limits of their work, which then impacts what these groups do together.

Example. Building a community of practice where those concerned about math education in Ontario work together to change curriculums in schools.[ix]

3. Systems models of KM aim to create change in all levels of a system. See figure on the left for an example. The systems model often uses relationships based on co-creation to meet these aims.



Example. Encouraging the use of research knowledge in education by making teachers co-researchers, creating research knowledge leaders in principals, making best-practices include research knowledge, and having government buy-in.[x]

In the 1st phase, KNAER used a relationship model, but plans to move towards a systems model in 2nd phase.

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[i] Campbell, C., Pollock, K., Carr-Harris, S., & Briscoe, P. (2014). KNAER Final Report. Ontario: Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research.
[ii] FoodARC's Knowledge Mobilization Working Group. (2014). *Knowledge mobilization in participatory action research: A synthesis of the literature*.
[iii] Parekh, G. (May 2017). Advocacy from the Inside Out: Employing School Board Data to Advance System Change. Presented at WERA Per-Conference Community Advocacy in/for Education, Toronto: Ontario.
[iv] Campbell, C., Pollock, K., Carr-Harris, S., & Briscoe, P. (2014). KNAER Final Report. Ontario: Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research.
[v] Ontario Government. (2014). Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario (pp. 1–23). Ontario.
[vi] OECD. (2012). Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools. OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264130852-en
[vii] Rodway, J. (2015). Connecting the dots: Understanding the flow of research knowledge within a research brokering network. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 23(123), 1–27.
[viii] The Council of Ontario Directors of Education. (2014). *Equity and Inclusive Education: Going Deeper* (Working Document) (pp. 1–35). Ontario.
[ix] Mathematics Knowledge Network (2017). Retrieved from: http://www.knaer-recrae.ca/knaer-networks/math-network
[x] Ontario Government. (2014). Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario (pp. 1–23). Ontario.