

Trust and Research Evidence

Robert Asen

Research Use, Trust, and Deliberation

- Deliberation: “Reflecting carefully on a matter, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions to a problem to make decisions together as a small group, an organization, or a nation.” (Gastil, 2008)
- Trust in deliberation: Practices undertaken by interlocutors to bolster trust among other participants
- In the group decision-making contexts we examined, research evidence was introduced into the deliberations by people participating directly or indirectly.

Qualities of deliberative trust

- Deliberative trust is practiced.
- Deliberative trust is relational.
- Deliberative trust is potentially transformative.

Method

- The three districts
- Interview basics
- Interview protocol
- Discourse analysis

Finding 1: Levels of trust in research and decision-makers influence use

- When a meeting participant introduces research evidence, others make judgments about the credibility and trustworthiness not only of the research evidence cited but of the person presenting the research evidence.
- Judgments about the person may shape understandings and evaluations of the research evidence.
- Higher levels of trust among decision-makers may encourage the use of research presented during deliberations and low levels of trust may discourage the use of research.

Finding 2: Multiple relationships of trust influence use of research evidence

- Trust among board members
 - Openness
 - Transparency
 - Goodwill
 - Commitment to deliberation
- Trust between board members and administration
 - Transparency
 - Flexibility
 - Shared perceptions of roles

Finding 2: Multiple relationships of trust influence use of research evidence

- Trust between decision-makers and researchers
 - Bias
 - Experience
 - Feasibility
- Trust between decision-makers and the community
 - Communication
 - Constituent interests

Finding 2: Multiple relationships of trust influence use of research evidence

- All four relationships may influence decision-makers' willingness to use research evidence.
- A single person's behavior could positively or negatively influence relations of trust among groups of decision-makers.
- Interviewees attributed different meanings to these relationships.

Finding 3: Trust in research evidence arises in relationships built over time.

- Board members and administrators understood trust as a practice that could be transformed over time.
- Maintaining relations of trust required their active involvement.
- Low levels of trust could be reversed by following practices articulated by interviewees.