



# Modelling research-informed practice: why it's important for theory and practice

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# *Research Unit for Research Utilisation (RURU)*

Developing cross-sector knowledge on research use

Education Healthcare Social Care Criminal Justice

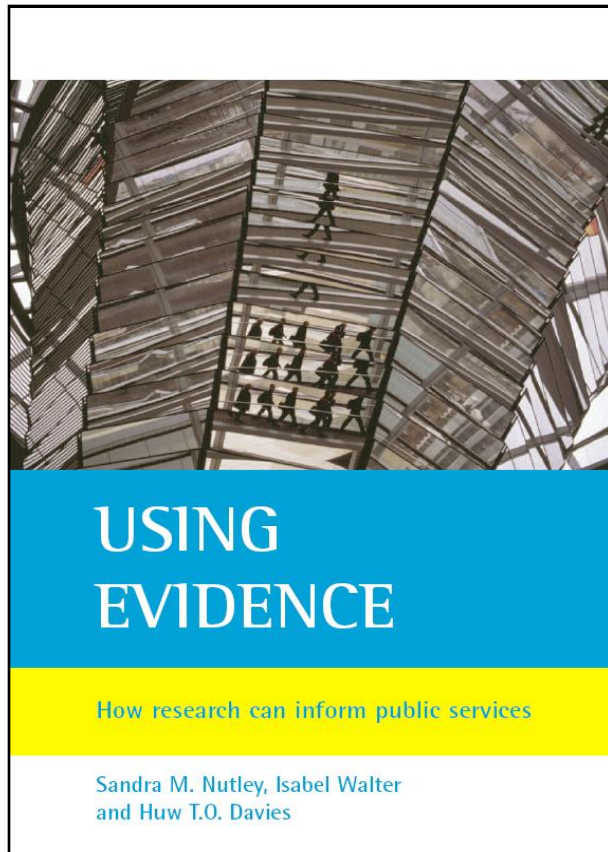


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What does it  
mean to “use”  
research?

Understanding  
the *complexities*  
of research use

How can research  
use/impact be  
*facilitated?*



*“Anyone who has ever written or utter the words ‘evidence-based policy’ should read this outstanding book.” (Carol Weiss, Harvard)*

*"This book is a major contribution to the literature: clear, thoughtful, relevant and evidence-informed.” (Tom Rundall, UC Berkeley)*

## ***Using Evidence: How research can inform public services***

**(Nutley, Walter and Davies, Policy Press, 2007)**

# Conceptual frameworks

- **Conceptual reviews** of diffusion, learning and knowledge management literatures
- **Application of policy networks framework** in analysing evidence use in sex offender policy
- **Application of organisation and individual learning frameworks** in analysing use of learning networks evaluating 3 learning networks established by Health Scotland

## Objectives

- How research is used
- Ways of promoting research use
- Models of research use
- Implications for improving research use

## Methods

- Literature review
- Consultation seminars and interviews



## Improving the use of research in social care practice



# Models of research use

Research-based  
practitioner

Embedded  
research

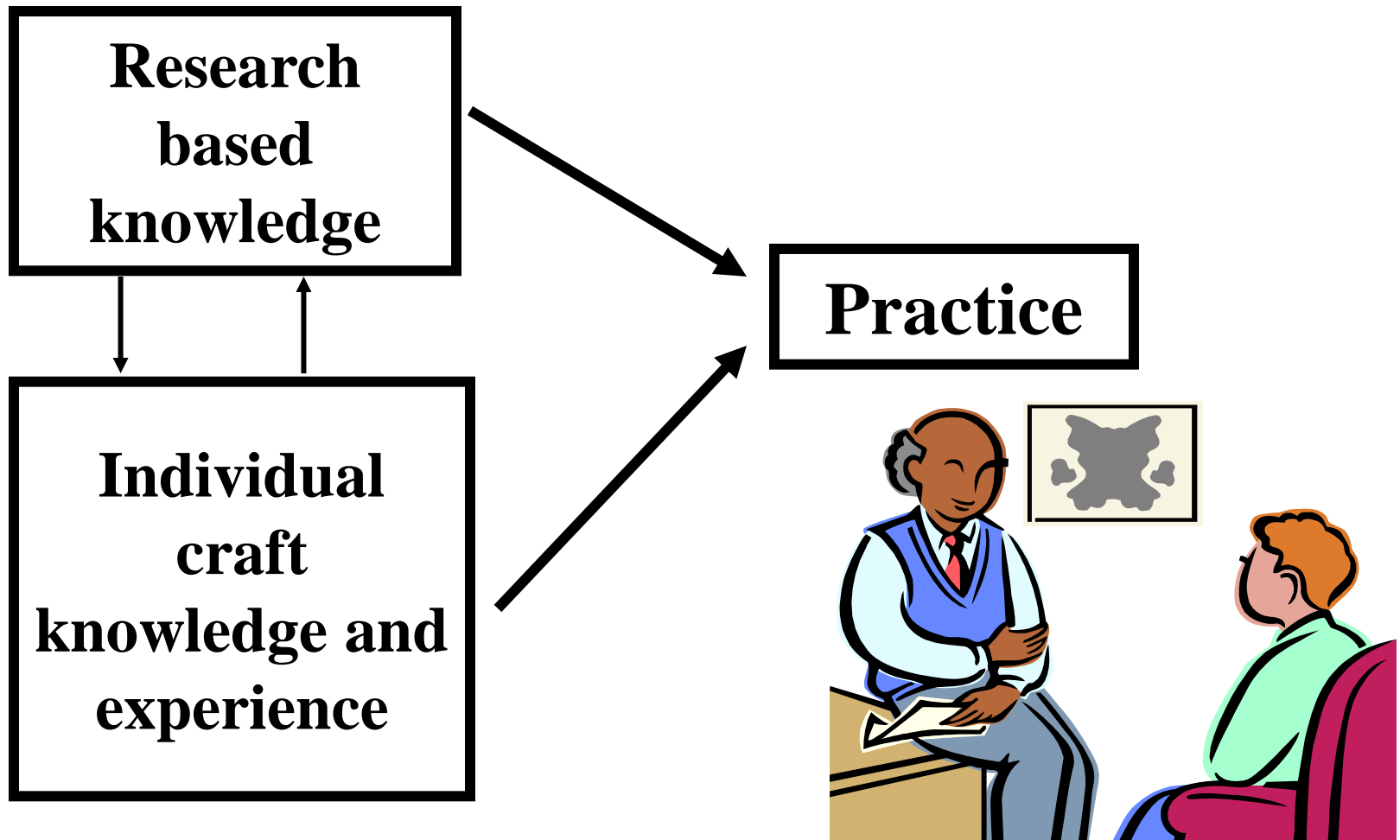
Organisational  
excellence

# Research-based practitioner model

- Role and responsibility of individual practitioners to keep up-to-date with and apply research
- Use of research is a linear process - access, appraise, apply
- Assumes professional autonomy
- Emphasises professional education and training



# Research based practitioner



# Embedded research model

- Research is embedded in systems and processes - standards, policies and tools
- Research use viewed as linear and instrumental
- Responsibility for research use lies with policy makers and managers
- Performance management and regulatory regimes encourage the use of guidance and tools

# Probation system redesign in UK

**Surveys, audits  
and forecasts**



**Research on  
what works**

**Risk & needs  
assessment tools**

**National Core  
Curriculum of  
offender programmes**

**Staff & programme  
accreditation scheme**

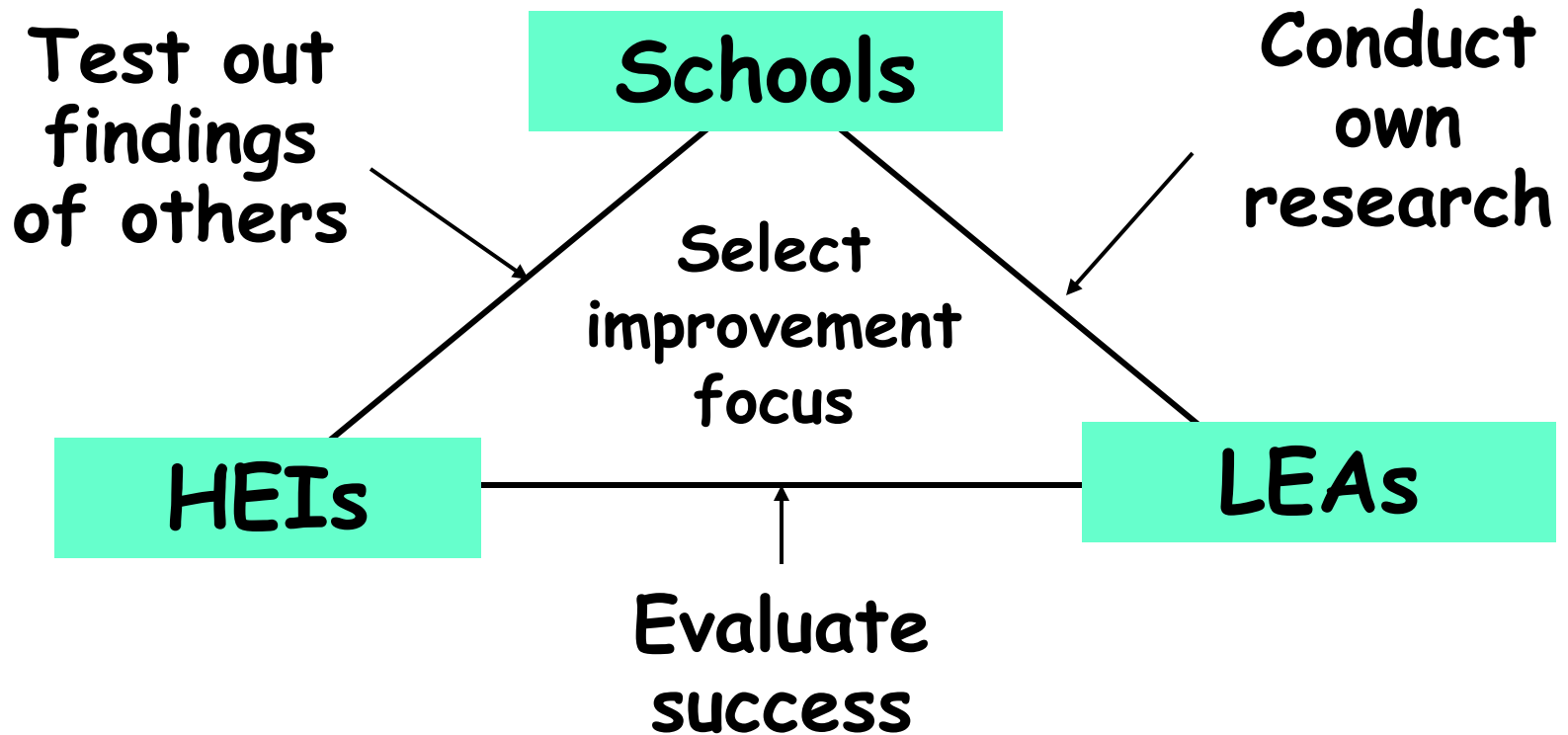
**Case Management**

**New scrutiny regime**

# Organisational excellence model

- Leadership, management and organisation of social care delivery organisations is key
- Local adaptation of research findings and ongoing learning
- Importance of developing a “research-minded” local culture
- Partnerships with local universities and intermediary organisations

# UK School-based research consortia



The models provide a framework for considering whether and how different mechanisms for promoting research use might be combined

# Models concerned with combined answers to at least 5 questions

- What it means to use research – instrumental and/or conceptual use
- Tensions between innovation and replication in research use
- Nature of knowledge for practice – how it is produced and validated
- Relationship between researchers and practitioners
- Who or what are the main targets for activities aim at improving research use

# Different models in different contexts

- **Different staff groups**  
embedded research model more appropriate for non-professionally qualified workforce?
- **Different stages in developing research use**  
practitioner involvement in developing guidance and tools may be important
- **Different types of research**  
some types of research translate directly into practice - others challenge preconceptions and form a backdrop to policy and practice



# Conclusions - taking forward research use in theory

- 1 **Models helpful in teasing out key assumptions** underpinning efforts to increase research use
- 2 **Models not mutually exclusive** but combining them is likely to produce tensions
- 3 **Further study** may reveal additional models or more clearly articulated hybrids

NB: See Nutley et al 2008, Cambridge Journal of Education, 38 (1): 53-71

***Thank You***

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