



WHAT IS RESEARCH BROKERAGE AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

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Insights from the Center for Research Use in Education

DATA POINTS

Ships passing in the night. It's a metaphor we might use to describe the relationship between research and practice in education. Decades of research have documented a disconnect between these two communities, often attributed to the different cultures, structures, and purposes of each. Two lines of work respond to this demand. First are efforts to create *direct* links between research and practice. Research-practice partnerships (RPPs) represent one promising strategy. However, for most practitioners and researchers, relationships are *indirect*, with knowledge and information shared through organizations or individuals we refer to as research brokers. In fact, in our data, most educators reported no direct connections to researchers. Therefore, we need to better understand the individuals and organizations that help bridge the "third space" between research and practice.

What is research brokerage? Traditionally, brokers serve as intermediaries, creating a tie between research and practice, depicted in Figure 1 at right. However, research suggests that brokerage is more complex, with multiple brokers performing multiple tasks that support use. We believe that we can better understand and strengthen pathways between practice and research by focusing on brokerage as *a dynamic and complex set of actors, activities, and motivations within which research is exchanged, transformed, and otherwise communicated.*

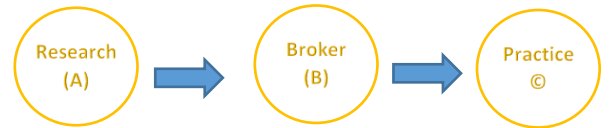


Figure 1.

Figure 2 depicts some of these more complex pathways in which **activities** (*black italic text*), **motivations** (yellow text), **knowledge exchange events** (grey arrows) and **actors** (green boxes for researchers, orange ovals for intermediaries, and blue triangles for schools), comprise a system of research brokerage.

Why does research brokerage matter? Understanding and leveraging research brokers can strengthen ties between research and practice, help educators identify reliable sources of research-based information, and help researchers partner to make their findings more accessible and actionable to educators. It also can help us better develop and prepare individuals to serve in these roles and build capacity across the system.

Stay tuned for findings featuring:

- ✓ Case studies tracking research as it moves between research and practice
- ✓ Data about researchers and educators as brokers

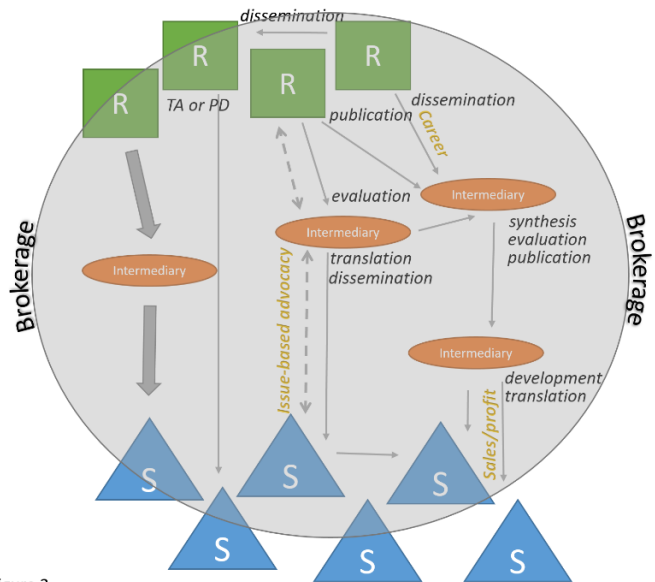


Figure 2.

For more about research brokerage:

[Brokering the research-practice gap: A typology and What types of brokerage bridge the research-practice gap? \(Michigan School Program Information Project\)](#)

[Education knowledge brokerage and mobilization](#)

[A multiple case study of brokerage in education](#)

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