

The Audiences for Education Research and Pathways to Enhancing Use

**Kent McGuire, President and CEO
Southern Education Foundation**

Enabling Conditions:

- Budding interest in field (demand to know);
- Knowledge-base exists to inform the research design (well-specified questions, appropriate methods, etc.);
- There are reasonably clear and specific interventions to study;
- Can fit data to the questions being asked; and
- Can secure cooperation (participants, access to data, etc.)

Use may be enhanced when:

- Research maps onto a problem/set of problems that someone is trying to solve;
- There is potential to generate or contribute new knowledge in an area/field where evidence is sparse;
- It sheds light key theoretical questions;
- Speaks directly to points of disagreement -- bones of contention -- in the field; and
- Helps in ruling out alternative solutions -- provides advice on what NOT to do.

Obstacles to Consideration and Use:

- Disputes about quality;
- Controversial findings;
- No clear findings, inconclusive results;
- Policy context shifts while research is in progress;
- Skill/capacity to use effectively;

Clearing these obstacles might entail:

- New power dynamics -- enabling voices from new communities to speak to what's worth investigating;
- New paradigms that integrate the creation and use of knowledge (Strategic Education Research Program [SEPR], Improvement Research/Knowledge Networks [Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching]); and
- New procurement mechanisms.



Founded in 1867 as the George Peabody Education Fund, the Southern Education Foundation's mission is to advance equity and excellence in education for all students in the South, particularly low income students and students of color. SEF uses collaboration, advocacy, and research to improve outcomes from early childhood to adulthood.

Our core belief is that education is the vehicle by which all students get fair chances to develop their talents and contribute to the common good.

WWW.SOUTHERNEDUCATION.ORG