

Q CONVERSATION

JULY 2022

EDUCATORS' SHARING & RECEIVING RESEARCH

As part of Monash Q Project's aim to improve the use of research in schools, we want to develop a shared understanding of what it means to use research well. Facilitating rich and reflective conversations amongst practitioners is key to such understanding.

Q Conversation is a resource designed for school practitioners to promote discussion and reflection about research use attitudes and practices, using Q's emerging findings and considerations as prompts. We suggest that this resource can be used in professional learning or discussion contexts within a school, a community of practice, or a school network.

WHAT IS THIS Q CONVERSATION ABOUT?

This **Q Conversation** is focused on how educators **access, receive, share and use research** and how these practices contribute to **using research well** in practice.

Despite most educators believing in the value of research use, research is not used often in practice ([Rickinson et al., 2020](#)). One reason for this is a lack of access to relevant research ([Rickinson et al., 2021](#); [van Schaik et al., 2018](#)). School leaders and teachers can improve their access by being connected with different networks and channels that can help them to acquire or receive different research and evidence ([Finnigan & Daly, 2014](#); [Finnigan et al., 2013](#)). They can also improve others' access by sharing new research ideas and knowledge, particularly within their schools. Understanding the research sharing and receiving practices of school communities, therefore, is important in knowing how to support their improved research in practice.

From a Q Project survey in 2021 with 819 respondents, findings suggest that Australian educators:

- (i) **receive and share** research and evidence **regularly**, and do so mainly from and with **colleagues within their schools**;
- (ii) rely on **school leaders to be connected with external sources and networks** and bring research and evidence into their schools and share it;
- (iii) have **different preferences** when it comes to accessing, receiving, sharing and using research and evidence. **School leaders**, rather than teachers, **are more likely to be active and engaged sharers** of research and evidence.

This **Q Conversation** draws on a suite of Q publications:

- (i) **Q Data Insight** reporting key findings regarding educators' research and evidence receiving and sharing preferences and practices;
- (ii) **Q Narrative** showcasing how a leader at Malahide College leverages different networks and sources to acquire and receive research and then shares it within his school; and
- (iii) **Q Behavioural Insight** highlighting a number of behaviour change principles that can help educators to share research with others in ways that may improve their research engagement.

Q Conversation is designed to be: (i) **informative** – by sharing Q insights from Australian educators; (ii) **thought-provoking** – by encouraging school leaders and teachers think about their own attitudes and practices in light of Q insights; and (iii) **action-oriented** – by prompting leaders and teachers to convert their reflections into actions for school improvement.

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Several **Q Conversation** structures are offered – some shorter and more targeted around specific findings or behaviours, and others more encompassing and challenging by drawing on broader findings and complementary research. Accompanying presentation slides are available.

Q CONVERSATION SUGGESTIONS

Using the **Q Data Insight** and **Q Narrative** as guides, the following questions may be helpful as prompts for individual reflection or small group discussion, with insights shared with the broader group:

- (i) How do I/we currently access and/or acquire research? Who do I/we rely on to receive research? What actions can I/we consider that will help us to broaden the ways in which I/we access and/or receive research?
- (ii) What type of evidence sharer am I/are we? How does thinking about myself/ourselves in this way help me/us to improve my/our research use?

The **Q Behavioural Insight** suggests four principles of behaviour change that sharers can apply to enhance colleagues' engagement with research. Reflecting on these, consider the following for individual reflection or small group discussion:

- (i) To what extent am I/are we applying each of these principles in my/our school when sharing research with others?
- (ii) What changes can I/we make to the ways in which I/we share research with others? How easy or difficult will it be to make these changes?
- (iii) How do I/we communicate with others about the improvements I/we are making to the ways in which I/we intend to share research? How do I/we engage others in these changes so that I/we improve others' attitudes towards using research better in practice?

[Finnigan, Daly, and Che \(2013\)](#) use social network analysis to look at the ways that staff in schools and school districts acquire, use and diffuse research. On pp. 484-486, different school networks are shown and described. Using these maps and descriptions of acquisition and sharing practices, consider the following for small group discussion:

- (i) If we were to 'map' our school's social network for acquiring research, what would it look like? Who brings research into the school? Where are they acquiring research from?
- (ii) How 'centralised' (p. 486) is our map? How reliant are we on one or two individuals?
- (iii) How is research diffused or shared within our school? Who does this? How much and how often is research reaching different staff (p. 486)?
- (iv) In what ways can this map help us to identify ways to improve the ways in which we acquire and share research?

According to the Q Project's [Quality Use of Research Evidence \(QURE\) Framework](#), using research well involves accessing, receiving and sharing appropriate research evidence.

How leaders encourage staff to receive and share multiple sources of research and evidence through informal and formal channels is therefore important.

Share your experiences and school's insights generated from **Q Conversations**. To connect with us,



[Q Project Website](#)



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