What does it take to center anti-racist research in policy and practice?

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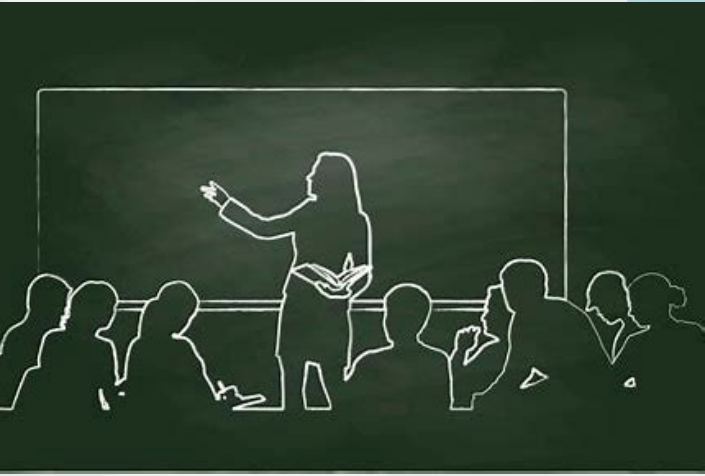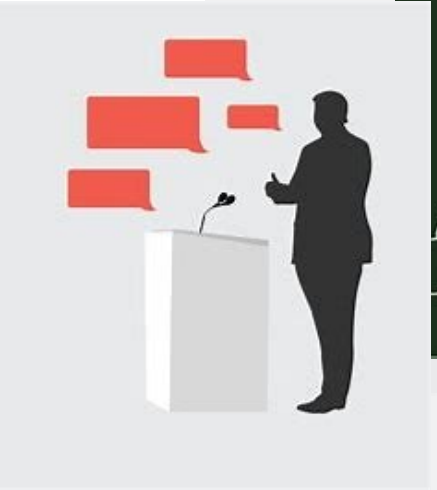**William T. Grant**
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Many think of URE as this...

When it is really more like this...

What have we learned about HOW research is used?

When is research is used?

- Research is most frequently used when problems are being defined and prioritized.
  - Research plays a lesser role when designing policies or programs for implementation (possibly due to timeliness of findings)
- Research is used when there is broad consensus about the problem but less clarity on what to do about it.
  - Research is less likely to be used in highly polarized or contexts where values will drive decisions.

Asen, Gurke, Conners, Solomon, & Gumm, 2013; Courtney & Mosley, 2012; Hyde, Mackie, Palinkas, Niemi, & Leslie, 2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2014; National Research Council, 2012; Nicholson, 2014; Nathanson, 2014)

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When is research is used?

The New York Times

Can New Gun Violence Research Find a Path Around the Political Stalemate?

Asen, Gurke, Conners, Solomon, & Gumm, 2013; Courtney & Mosley, 2012; Hyde, Mackie, Palinkas, Niemi, & Leslie, 2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2014; National Research Council, 2012; Nicholson, 2014; Nathanson, 2014)

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Under what conditions is research used?

Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010)

What have we learned about when research is used?

- Responsive
- Routinized
- Relational

What is missing?

Yanovitzky, 2020; Best & Holmes, 2010; Bogenschneider et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2016; Oliver et al., 2014

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What ARE critical perspectives?

- "Critical theories interrogate societal systems and structures with particular attention to the production and reproduction of power hierarchies, social inequities, and the taken-for-granted assumptions of ideological hegemonies such as settler colonialism, patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism, and imperialism" (Doucet, 2019).

- **Critical**
  - A political and intellectual location

- **Race**
  - A substantive focus

- **Theory**
  - A coherent account of race and law

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Centering the Margins:
(Re)defining Useful
Research Evidence
Through Critical
Perspectives

Fabienne Doucet, December 2019

"Research is inextricably implicated in the societal structures and systems that have served to maintain power hierarchies and accept social inequity as a given" (Doucet, 2019)

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What do critical race perspectives tell us about research?

3 ways research can be racist (Libby McClure)

1. Research that is used to justify harms
2. Research that forces impacted groups to prove harms
3. Research that doesn't respond to community concerns

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Defining anti-racist research

How?
Race- and Racism-Conscious

For Whom?
People- and Community-centered

What?
Strengths-based

By Whom?
Co-constructed

Why?
Humanizing

Anti-Racist Research

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URE from an anti-racist perspective

- How do we think about the use of research evidence from an anti-racist perspective
  1. Even if the research was not created with that intent?
  2. When the research in question is explicitly anti-racist?

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Realizing Arlington's Commitment to Equity (RACE)

Realizing Arlington's Commitment to Equity (RACE)

- Who stands to benefit from the use of this research?
- If we use this research, who will be burdened?
- Who is missing from this body of evidence vis-à-vis whose conditions we hope to improve by using this research?
- What research is *not* being used?
- What are the implications of this study for the use of evidence?

Evaluating LEAD (Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity) (Ferdinand et al., 2017)

- Improve health and reduce anxiety and depression among Aboriginal Australian and other diverse communities through the prevention of racism

- Working within organizations to reduce racism, rather than working with communities to cope with racism

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Evaluating LEAD (Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity) (Ferdinand et al., 2017)

- Key aims of LEAD (4-year program)
  1. Generate high-quality evidence regarding anti-racism interventions through program evaluation
  2. Facilitate the uptake of available evidence

- Partnership model supported generation of new evidence and uptake of existing evidence

- Demonstrated a high level of uptake of anti-racist strategies within employment and council settings

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Anti-racist research and the 3 Rs

- Responsive
  - How can we center equity and diverse voices in the formation of research questions? How can we ensure the research used is strengths-based?

- Routinized
  - What questions should research users & producers ask about research that are racism-conscious?

- Relational
  - How do power dynamics affect trust among stakeholders? Who gets opportunities to engage with decision-makers?

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Methods for researching the use of antiracist research evidence

"We can no more afford methodologically rich research studies that lack racial consciousness than we can afford racially conscious studies that lack methodological rigor" (Kirkland, 2019)

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Methods for researching the use of antiracist research evidence

- Gitomer & Crouse (2019)
  - Study designs
    - Social Network Analysis
    - Experiments and quasi-experiments
    - Case studies
  - Data collection methods
    - Interviews
    - Surveys
    - Observation and discourse analysis
    - Document analysis

? What questions are being asked?

? Who is at the table?

? What measures are being used?

? What procedures are being used?

? How are the analyses and results conceptualized?

? How are findings disseminated?

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Methods for researching the use of antiracist research evidence

PRECIS Model

Mixed methods

Participatory approaches

OUTSIDE

Critical quantitative studies

Visual methods

Arts-based methods

Narrative inquiry

THINK THE BOX

Decentering Whiteness

Critical Discourse Analysis

Policy discourse analysis

Critical Policy Analysis

Examples of what research on using antiracist research might look like

- Research to foster more routine and constructive uses of existing research evidence.
  - Intermediaries decide what research is prioritized and therefore used, what structural or social conditions led intermediaries to prioritize antiracist research?
  - In what ways can we create the conditions for more scholars of color to develop relationships with decision-makers?

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Examples of what research on using antiracist research might look like

- Research on creating responsive research
  - What factors in an organization's culture or values lead to the demand for antiracist research? How can be better understand the racial discourse in decision-making that drives which research is used?

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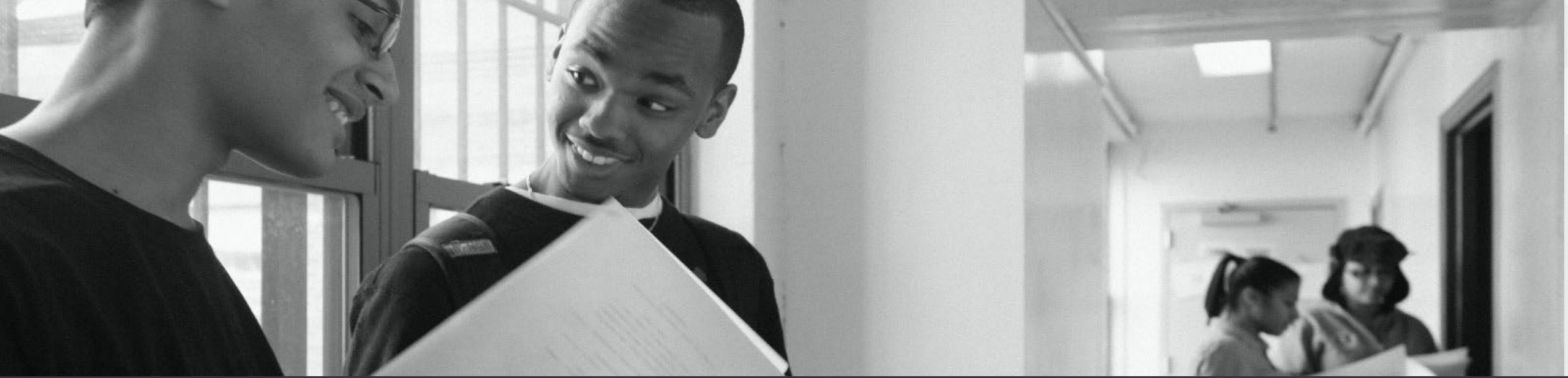# Examples of what research on using antiracist research might look like

- Research connecting research to improved youth outcomes?
  - Does the use of antiracist research lead to improved youth outcomes for all youth and reduce disparities for youth of color?

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Want to help us answer these questions?

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Funding Opportunities

Use of Research Evidence

Improving the Use of Research Evidence

- Identify, create, and test the structural and social conditions that **foster more routine and constructive uses of existing research evidence.**

- Identify, create, and test the incentives, structures, and relationships that facilitate the production of new research evidence that **responds to decision makers' needs.**

- Investigate **whether and under what conditions** using high quality research evidence improves decision making and youth outcomes.

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Types of Studies

- Descriptive studies that clarify the mechanisms for improving research use.

- Intervention studies that examine attempts to improve research use.

- Measurement studies of the use of research evidence that will enhance the work of researchers or decision makers.

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Application Tips

- Clearly identify how you will conceptualize and operationalize the use of research evidence.

- Focus on an area in which a body of research evidence, if used, has the potential to benefit youth.

- Proposals should be strong both theoretically and methodologically.

- Special interest in state and local decision makers and intermediary organizations.

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Funding Opportunities

- Research Grants
- Scholars Award
- Institutional Challenge Grant

Research Grants

- The goal of this program is to fund studies that build theory and empirical evidence in our two primary focus areas.

- Letters of inquiry are accepted in January, May, and August. Applicants with promising projects will be invited to submit a full proposal for further consideration.

- Major grants on the use of research evidence range from $100,000 to $1,000,000 and cover two to four years of support.

- Officers' research grants typically range from $25,000 to $50,000. Applications are accepted in January and August unless they are for studies related to COVID-19.

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William T. Grant Scholars

- Early career researchers (7 years or less from the Ph.D. or residency for M.D.s.

- Applications are accepted annually in July and reviewed by the Scholars Selection Committee.

- Scholars receive $350,000 each to support five years of research and a mentoring plan to acquire new expertise.

- Scholars also are offered opportunities to network and build their skills through meetings and workshops.

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Institutional Challenge Grant

- The goal of this program is to encourage research institutions to build sustained research-practice partnerships with public agencies or nonprofit organizations in order to reduce inequality in youth outcomes.

- Applications are accepted once per year in June and are reviewed by the Institutional Challenge Grant Selection Committee.

- Applications are welcome from partnerships in youth-serving areas such as education, justice, child welfare, mental health, immigration, and workforce development.

- The Foundation will make a $650,000 award to a research institution to support a research-practice partnership for three years. The award may be renewable for an additional two-year term.

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Application Tips

- Make sure the fit is strong.

- Show how the work significantly adds to theory and prior empirical work.

- Tackle a few research questions or hypotheses well.

- Show the project's relevance for policy or practice.

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Application Tips

- Map research design, methods, and analyses tightly to the research questions or hypotheses.

- Provide sufficient information for reviewers to evaluate rigor and appropriateness of methods.

- Demonstrate your understanding of the strengths and limitations of the design, methods, and analyses.

- Respond to reviews seriously, graciously, and in depth.

Questions?

THANK YOU!

Supporting Research to Improve the Lives of Young People

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