Co-production in organization development

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Aims of this session

1. The Centre for Policing Research and Learning as an example of co-production, between The Open University and 18 police forces
2. Centre for co-production of knowledge creation and use in three streams of work: education, research and knowledge exchange
3. An example of co-production in work on organizational justice in policing
Complex issues often involve collaborative working – improving the creation, understanding and use of research evidence can be enhanced by collaboration between academic and police organizations.

But collaborations are not easy:
“research… concludes… that collaborations are complex, slow to produce outputs, and by no means guaranteed to deliver synergies and advantage”

(Vangen, in press) (see also O’Leary and Bingham, 2009)
Real collaborative structures

• NOT the police commissioning the university to provide courses or carry out research
• NOT the university telling the police what is in their best interests

Instead:
• Mode 2 collaboration – recognising and respecting the value each party brings to the table whilst also challenging each other about assumptions, evidence-base and practices
Mode 2: problem-centred, multi-disciplinary, multiple stakeholders each holding part of the insights and explanations of phenomena, interest in practice and use of evidence.

“Mode 2 involves the close interaction of many actors throughout the process and this means that knowledge production is becoming more socially accountable. Overall, the process of knowledge production is becoming more reflexive and affects at the deepest level what shall count as ‘good science’.” (Gibbon et al, 1994, vii)
relationship between academics and practitioners
Centre for Policing Research and Learning
Centre for Policing Research and Learning

Videos from Past Evidence Cafes

Weymouth Evidence Cafe - May 2016 from Gill Clough

#evidencecafe

"Learning how to translate research into policing practice"

Weymouth Evidence Cafe 2016 from Gill Clough on Vimeo.

The Dorset Force Evidence Cafe was held in Weymouth and focused on the topic of Collecting First Accounts from Children, framed in a discussion of Evidence-Based Practice. Over 40 officers from all ranks attended. The video lasts 2m12sec.

Blackburn Evidence Cafe - March 2016 from Gill Clough

‘Translating research into policing practice’

Evidence Cafe Blackburn 2016 from Gill Clough on Vimeo.

The Lancashire Force Evidence Cafe was held in Blackburn and explored Evidence-Based Practice, drawing on examples from other domains (e.g. medicine, health care) and considering lessons that could be applicable to the policing context. The video lasts 2m32sec.
Thinking about research into practice: knowledge, evidence and truth
What is organizational justice?

• ‘The term ‘organisational justice’ refers to the extent to which employees perceive workplace procedures, interactions and outcomes to be fair in nature.’ (Baldwin, Institute of Employment Studies)

• In policing the motivation is to promote a culture of learning rather than blame and to create a climate where staff feel comfortable to openly report near misses and mistakes.

• To do this, we need a clear understanding of the components of justice. So, by way of example, let us explore a few ideas around knowledge, evidence and truth.
Knowledge and evidence

- Knowledge and evidence are not the same:
  - Evidence is normally used to describe hard, measureable data.
  - Knowledge also includes what we have learned from our experiences.
  - Our knowledge often ‘privileged’ as a result of our environment and our learning.
  - Link to value of quantitative and qualitative methods – mixed methods.

(Source: Thorpe, 2011 and Stanford, 2014)
Knowledge and evidence

- concept of evidence differs between philosophical and non-philosophical contexts
  - former defined by epistemic stance
    - positivist
    - critical
    - postmodern
  - latter often physical objects e.g. a blood-stained shirt

(Source: Thorpe, 2011 and Stanford, 2014)
Knowledge and evidence

- evidence informs management knowledge
- evidence used to underpin decision making
- existing knowledge fundamental to professional practice
- creating new knowledge probably even more important
To summarise, and as we have seen, concepts of knowledge and evidence are influenced by how we view our worlds.

On the one hand: ‘Evidence is the only reason to believe anything.’ (Dawkins, 2017)

On the other hand: ‘...knowledge and power are intertwined.’ and ‘Rather than ultimate and objective, knowledge is tentative and slippery,...’ (Hassard et al, 2008)

What about truth?
Evidence and truth

- evidence is not the same as truth
  - observations are often partial
  - new evidence will emerge over time
  - interpreting evidence can be subject to personal bias
- evidence can be seen as justifying belief (Garfinkel, 1967)
- search for multiple truths rather than a single truth

(Source: Thorpe and Sandford, 2014)
• Civil law – e.g. discrimination law - relies, to some extent, on the drawing of inferences to meet a balance of probabilities finding

• can you make an objective inference?

• probably not – human interpretation always engaged

• but you can establish an objective fact – one candidate scored higher than another, for example, in a recruitment process (albeit that the marking system was created by the subjective mind(s))

• does the objective fact speak (i.e. to the case)

• if yes, can draw inference

• I leave it to you to reflect on whether this means we have found the truth or a preferred version of the truth
Thank you
Reflection

• Where could co-production be beneficial for your organization?

• How are you approaching organizational justice in your organization?