International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership

Networked Learning for Knowledge Mobilization: Universities and the Pursuit of Research Impact

Stephen MacGregor et David Phipps

Volume 21, numéro 1, 2025

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1117840ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.22230/ijepl.2025v21n1a1423

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

Simon Fraser University, University of Delaware, Phi Delta Kappa International

ISSN

1555-5062 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

MacGregor, S. & Phipps, D. (2025). Networked Learning for Knowledge Mobilization: Universities and the Pursuit of Research Impact. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, *21*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.22230/ijepl.2025v21n1a1423

Résumé de l'article

On sait peu de choses sur les universitaires qui facilitent l'impact de la recherche et sur les réseaux qu'ils forment pour renforcer les capacités institutionnelles. Cet article explore les efforts d'Impact Recherche Canada, un réseau professionnel pancanadien qui se consacre au renforcement des capacités institutionnelles en matière d'impact de la recherche entre disciplines. À partir d'entretiens avec vingt informateurs clés de ce réseau, l'analyse a fait ressortir trois thèmes principaux : a) la diversité des approches pour faciliter l'impact, b) la philosophie du réseau en matière d'apprentissage en réseau, et c) les principales tensions inhérentes à l'apprentissage en réseau. Les résultats suggèrent que des rôles et des unités institutionnels spécifiques peuvent contribuer à répondre aux exigences de la facilitation de l'impact, et que l'apprentissage en réseau semble important pour soutenir ces rôles et ces unités.

International Journal of
Education Policy & Leadership

IJEPL
Volume 21(1)
2025

Networked Learning for Knowledge Mobilization: Universities and the Pursuit of Research Impact

Stephen MacGregor, *University of Calgary* & David Phipps, *York University*

Abstract

Little is known about the university-based professionals who facilitate research impact and the networks they form to build institutional capacity. This article explores the efforts of Research Impact Canada, a pan-Canadian professional network dedicated to building institutional capacity for research impact across disciplines. Based on interviews with twenty key informants from the network, the analysis surfaced three overarching themes: a) the diversity of approaches to facilitating impact, b) the network's ethos for networked learning, and c) key tensions inherent in networked learning. The findings suggest that dedicated institutional roles and units may contribute toward addressing the demands of facilitating impact, and that networked learning appears important in supporting these roles and units.

Résumé

On sait peu de choses sur les universitaires qui facilitent l'impact de la recherche et sur les réseaux qu'ils forment pour renforcer les capacités institutionnelles. Cet article explore les efforts d'Impact Recherche Canada, un réseau professionnel pancanadien qui se consacre au renforcement des capacités institutionnelles en matière d'impact de la recherche entre disciplines. À partir d'entretiens avec vingt informateurs clés de ce réseau, l'analyse a fait ressortir trois thèmes principaux : a) la diversité des approches pour faciliter l'impact, b) la philosophie du réseau en matière d'apprentissage en réseau, et c) les principales tensions inhérentes à l'apprentissage en réseau. Les

Stephen MacGregor & David Phipps. (2025). Networked Learning for Knowledge Mobilization: Universities and the Pursuit of Research Impact. *International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership* *21*(1). doi:10.22230/ijepl.2025v21n1a1423

SFU
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
PDK
PHI DELTA KAPPA International

résultats suggèrent que des rôles et des unités institutionnels spécifiques peuvent contribuer à répondre aux exigences de la facilitation de l'impact, et que l'apprentissage en réseau semble important pour soutenir ces rôles et ces unités.

Keywords / Mots clés : research impact, knowledge mobilization, networked learning, network tensions / impact de recherche, mobilisation des connaissances, apprentissage en réseau, tensions dans les réseaux

Introduction

Universities hold a critical role in equipping societies to overcome local and global challenges (Hall & Tandon, 2021). Their historical functions as societal institutions trace back to the earliest models of higher education (Benneworth,Ćulum, Farnell, Kaiser, Seeber, et al., 2018), but recent decades have seen a confluence of social forces drive new expectations for how universities contribute to the public good (Calhoun, 2006; Kokshagina, Rickards, Steele, & Moraes, 2021). Most notably, higher education policy environments have put universities and researchers under increasing pressure to conceptualize and demonstrate how public research investments lead to impacts beyond the academy (Budtz Pedersen, Grønvad, & Hvidtfeldt, 2020; Reale, Avramov, Canhial, Donovan, Flecha, et al., 2018; Smit & Hessels, 2021).

As interest in impact has grown, so have efforts to improve institutional infrastructure (e.g., Bogenschneider, 2018; Wye, Cramer, Carey, Anthwal, Farr, & West, 2019). This field of inquiry is commonly referred to as knowledge mobilization (KMb), defined as "the range of active approaches to encourage the creation, sharing and use of research-informed knowledge alongside other forms of knowledge" (Powell, Davies, & Nutley, 2018, p. 38). Related terms such as knowledge exchange, knowledge translation, and knowledge transfer are frequently used in the literature and in practice, though they emphasize different facets of these processes. For instance, knowledge exchange often refers to bidirectional flows of information between researchers and stakeholders, knowledge translation typically describes adapting research findings to make them usable in practice, and knowledge transfer suggests a one-directional movement of knowledge from producers to users (Cooper, Rodway, & Read, 2018). Meanwhile, research impact generally denotes the broader outcomes or benefits arising from these processes, including societal, cultural, or economic change (Reed, Ferré, Martin-Ortega, Blanche, Lawford-Rolfe, et al., 2021). While these terms may overlap, this article consistently uses KMb to emphasize the intentional and collaborative strategies employed to facilitate the use of research knowledge in diverse contexts.

Although practice-based networks have been established to share insights about KMb, very little is known about professionals working within universities (i.e., those embedded within institutional settings) who facilitate KMb and participate in formal, pan-institutional networks dedicated to capacity building. Without understanding their experiences and perspectives on how universities can position themselves effectively regarding KMb, the potential to achieve impact may be circumscribed to structures and approaches for which there remains limited empirical evidence.

This article examines Research Impact Canada (RIC)—a pan-Canadian professional network comprising multiple universities—to better understand how networked learning supports KMb. This article uses *networked learning* to refer to processes through which geographically and organizationally dispersed individuals collaboratively share knowledge, co-develop strategies, and build capacity across institutional boundaries (Brown & Poortman, 2018). This analysis stems from a developmental evaluation (DE) of RIC to support the network's ongoing adaptation to changing conditions (e.g., institutional priorities), emerging understandings about effectively facilitating KMb, and expanding membership. Research Impact Canada is one of the only professional networks focused on developing KMb capacity at an institutional level, and its efforts offer a unique vantage point for examining how such networks function and evolve. In doing so, this study provides new insights into how these networks can flourish despite tensions that could otherwise spell fragmentation. To guide this inquiry, the authors pose the following research questions:

1. What are the networked learning experiences of professionals in university settings who facilitate KMb?
2. How can networked learning be structured to strengthen institutional KMb capacity and improve the use of KMb concepts in practice?

This article highlights the implications of our findings for a range of audiences, including KMb professionals, higher education leaders, policymakers, and scholars interested in how collaborative networks contribute to advancing societal impacts from research.

Knowledge mobilization and Research Impact Canada

In Canada, interest in KMb has burgeoned since the late 1990s (Holmes & Strauss, 2019). With roots in several prominent research programs (see Cooper & Levin, 2010), activity in this field now spans many sectors and professional backgrounds (e.g., Cooper et al., 2018; Nguyen, Graham, Mrklas, Bowen, Cargo, et al., 2020). Perspectives on what KMb encompasses have similarly expanded. Davies, Powell, and Nutley (2015) describe eight archetypes of KMb practices, each presenting different challenges, strengths, and situational appropriateness. Given the generally accepted view that KMb and impact are contingent on social, spatial, and temporal circumstances (Reed et al., 2021), rendering a comprehensive picture of KMb in Canada is complicated. Nevertheless, several broad characterizations can be drawn.

Beginning with the overarching provincial and federal levels, governments and research funders are intensifying expectations that publicly funded research demonstrates a return on investment for Canadian citizens (Veletanlić & Sá, 2019). While there are currently no research impact assessment exercises at a similar scale to those in the United Kingdom or Australia (see Williams & Grant, 2018), Canada is nonetheless implicated in the "performance and audit culture" (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2017, p. 2362) washing over national research systems. Instead of *ex post* assessments of impact, funding programs in Canada have traditionally incentivized researchers and their institutions to develop *ex ante* descriptions of how funded research will contribute to downstream impacts (MacGregor, Phipps, Edwards, Portes, & Kyffin, 2022). However, there are some recent moves toward performance-based funding,

where research outputs and outcomes are evaluated at a national or sub-national level to determine the distribution of research funding (Hicks, 2012). In Ontario, for example, the provincial government has introduced new performance-based funding agreements with all post-secondary institutions, which will increase the current 1.4 percent in operating funding tied to performance to 60 percent by 2025 (Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 2021). The agreements employ 10 metrics organized into two categories: skills and job outcomes, and economic and community impact. This latter category includes four metrics that target the broader impacts of publicly funded research:

a. Research funding and capacity for universities, and apprenticeship-related for colleges,
b. Research funding from industry sources/funding from industry sources,
c. Community/local impact of student population, and
d. Economic impact (institution-specific).

Notwithstanding the challenges of metric-based impact measurement (Wilsdon, Allen, Belfiore, Campbell, Curry, et al., 2015), the drift toward heightened accountability is set against a higher education sector grappling with various social, environmental, and economic uncertainties (e.g., anomalously low federal research spending compared with other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries; Naylor, Birgeneau, Crago, Lazaridis, Malacrida, et al., 2017).

At the institutional level, universities have traditionally made societal contributions through their educational and research activities (i.e., their two traditional missions; Miller, Mcadam, & Mcadam, 2014). Recently, though, their engagement with society has grown (Benneworth et al., 2018), and KMb is increasingly viewed as a core aspect of the third mission of universities (Laredo, 2007). Until recently, institutional efforts to produce and share research have primarily focused on generating economic impacts via technology transfer (Carl & Menter, 2021) and rational-linear models of how research gets used in policy and practice (Davies et al., 2015). Contemporary support for KMb emerged not only in response to the limitations of these earlier approaches but also to various external pressures. To name a few, universities are contending with myriad other knowledge producers vying for public attention and funding (e.g., think tanks; Cain, Shore, Weston, & Sanders, 2018), growing (inter)national competition with other universities on performance metrics (Wilsdon et al., 2015), and increasingly complex and far-reaching societal challenges that necessitate diverse input (Bednarek, Wyborn, Cvitanovic, Meyer, Colvin, et al., 2018). However, concomitant institutional efforts to facilitate KMb have not progressed without challenges. Some of the most notable include:

- A limited understanding of KMb and how to prioritize, action, and evaluate it in diverse local and organizational contexts (Davies et al., 2015; Naidorf, 2014; Powell, Davies, & Nutley, 2017; Ward, Smith, House, & Hamer, 2012);
- Insufficient institutional support services, funding, coordination, and leadership for KMb (Kalbarczyk, Rodriguez, Mahendradhata, Sarker, Seme, et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2014; Sá et al., 2011), as well as few researchers accessing available resources (Cooper et al., 2018); and

- Identities, values, and purposes often misaligned with the cultural and structural changes triggered by the increasing emphasis on KMb and impact (Sá et al., 2011; Reed & Fazey, 2021).

A better understanding of these circumstances is necessary for advancing how universities engage with society. Studying the individuals and groups embedded within universities that drive KMb is an essential complement to that work.

Facilitation and the human force behind knowledge mobilization

Many scholars have stressed the need for skilled professionals who can mediate connections between research production and use contexts (e.g., Jessani et al., 2018; Wye et al., 2019). As "the human force behind [KMb]" (Ward et al., 2009, p. 2), their roles take varied forms depending on *who* is included, *where* they are positioned in social systems, *what* they do, and *how* (MacGregor & Phipps, 2020, Neal, Neal, & Brutzman, 2021). The variety of possible roles has led to a situation where little is known about KMb as a professional practice (Davies et al., 2015; Powell et al., 2018).

As a step toward addressing this issue, we employ the overarching concept of *facilitation*, a technique by which a person, group, or organization "makes things easier for others … [by providing] the types of support required to help people change their attitudes, habits, skills, ways of thinking, and working" (Kitson, Harvey, & McCormack, 1998, p. 152). Facilitation is a broad concept that can encompass diverse roles, including knowledge brokerage. While knowledge brokers typically focus on linking research producers and users through tailored, often sector- or issue-specific activities, facilitation extends beyond brokerage by nurturing collective competence, strengthening relational ties, and guiding adaptive learning processes among multiple actors (Cranley, Cummings, Profetto-McGrath, Toth, & Estabrooks, 2017). Facilitators may mobilize knowledge directly—by translating, synthesizing, or disseminating findings—or support others, such as researchers or knowledge brokers, in doing so. However, while earlier research has considered what roles and characteristics fall under the banner of facilitation (e.g., Cranley et al., 2017), there are few examples of its application to the study of complex systems comprising multiple KMb professionals working with diverse audiences across nested contexts.

Conceptual framework

To investigate the phenomenon of networked learning to advance KMb practices, our study draws on the integrated Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services (i-PARIHS) framework (Harvey & Kitson, 2016; Kitson, Rycroft-Malone, Harvey, McCormack, Seers, & Titchen, 2008). Although originally developed in healthcare settings, the i-PARIHS framework provides a way to understand how successful implementation (SI) is a function of "facilitation [Facn], innovation [I], recipients [R] and context [C]" (Harvey & Kitson, 2016, p. 2). In this study, we approached i-PARIHS as a sensitizing framework (Bowen, 2006), using its core constructs (innovation, recipients, and context) and the central concept of facilitation as conceptual guideposts. Rather than applying it as a strict coding scheme, we used the i-PARIHS framework to inform which key ideas and processes to attend to in our analysis, such as how facilitators adapt KMb approaches (innovation), how different

stakeholders value and engage with KMb (recipients), and how institutional environments influence networked learning (context). For example, facilitators might identify where institutional priorities and incentives (outer context) support or challenge their KMb activities, or assess the readiness and motivations of recipients to learn and co-create knowledge. In this way, i-PARIHS shaped the authors' orientation toward understanding facilitation as the active element that integrates these constructs, helping us pinpoint the actions and strategies that build institutional KMb capacity.

Methods

Developmental evaluation is an approach to evaluation that supports the development and administration of innovations in complex systems. It presents a distinct purpose and niche compared to traditional formative and summative evaluations (Patton, 2011). It respects eight principles: developmental purpose, evaluation rigour, utilization focus, innovation niche, complexity perspective, systems thinking, co-creation, and timely feedback (see Patton, 2016a, 2016b). In the context of this study, these principles were operationalized through iterative feedback loops, close engagement with the RIC Evaluation Committee, and adaptation of methods as new insights emerged. For example, the creation of additional data collection tools, such as follow-up interview questions on co-creation, was prompted by evolving priorities within the network (developmental purpose). Likewise, continuous interaction with RIC's committees enabled us to refine our analytic strategy (utilization focus) and ensure that findings were promptly shared for informed decision-making (timely feedback).

Evaluation context

Founded in 2006 through an Intellectual Property Mobilization grant provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, RIC has grown from a two-university collaboration into a network of 35 research organizations whose KMb efforts rank among the most impressive in Canada (Cooper, 2014). The network's activities have been likened to "a community of practice for research mobilization and includes knowledge brokers, researchers, and other practitioners looking to exchange information on best practices, past successes, and future directions" (McKean & Robbins, 2016, p. 6). Target audiences for the network's activities include its internal members (e.g., network contributors within each institution), the university partners with whom they share institutional settings (e.g., faculty, graduate students), and other partners external to the network's member universities (e.g., non-RIC universities, other KMb networks, funding agencies). Intended short- and long-term outcomes for these audiences ultimately advance the network's vision, which is to become "a globally leading network which supports researchers, students and their partners to demonstrate the contribution to and impact of research excellence" (Research Impact Canada, 2018; also see MacGregor & Phipps, 2020).

Data collection

The DE began in late 2018 and has since integrated multiple quantitative and qualitative data sources, including event data (e.g., dotmocracy activities during the an-

nual meeting), surveys, field notes, organizational documents, and interviews. The primary focus here concerns the semi-structured interviews that occurred between December 2019 and April 2020. A total of 20 key informants from 15 of the (at the time) 17 RIC member institutions participated in the interviews, which were conducted using the Zoom videoconferencing software. Participants' professional characteristics were systematically investigated before (via institutional websites) and during the interviews in order to inquire into their skills and experience in detail:

- All were professional staff, with nine having KMb in their job titles (e.g., Manager of KMb) and others having aspects of research communications, strategy, partnerships, exchange, or engagement.
- All but one worked under the leadership of a vice-president, research, or equivalent role.
- Seventeen stated KMb was the main concept used in their work, with the others using knowledge exchange, knowledge translation and transfer, or research impact.
- They possessed medians1 of 2.8 years in their institutional role and 2.0 years with RIC.

Interviews lasted 60–90 minutes, and the semi-structured approach ensured that the collected data were comprehensive and systematic, allowing for the anticipation and addressing of logical gaps in the data, and for the common interview guide to be tailored to participants' contexts (Adams, 2015; Patton, 2002). Each interview was audio-recorded, transcribed, and supplemented with field notes about the study context and interviews, which aided in developing rich descriptions of the experiences, perspectives, and contexts represented in the data (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). The interview guide[2] was developed in consultation with the Evaluation Committee and featured two groups of questions that explored a) prominent themes that arose earlier in the DE for which more fine-grained data were needed, and b) how RIC's capacity-building activities have contributed to its members' *use* of KMb concepts in practice (Penny Cooper & Associates, 2017). The guide was piloted with three scholars, each possessing expertise in KMb and program evaluation, resulting in minor adjustments to phrasing and the addition of several questions (e.g., "What do people in your university seem most animated about in terms of KMb?").

Data analysis

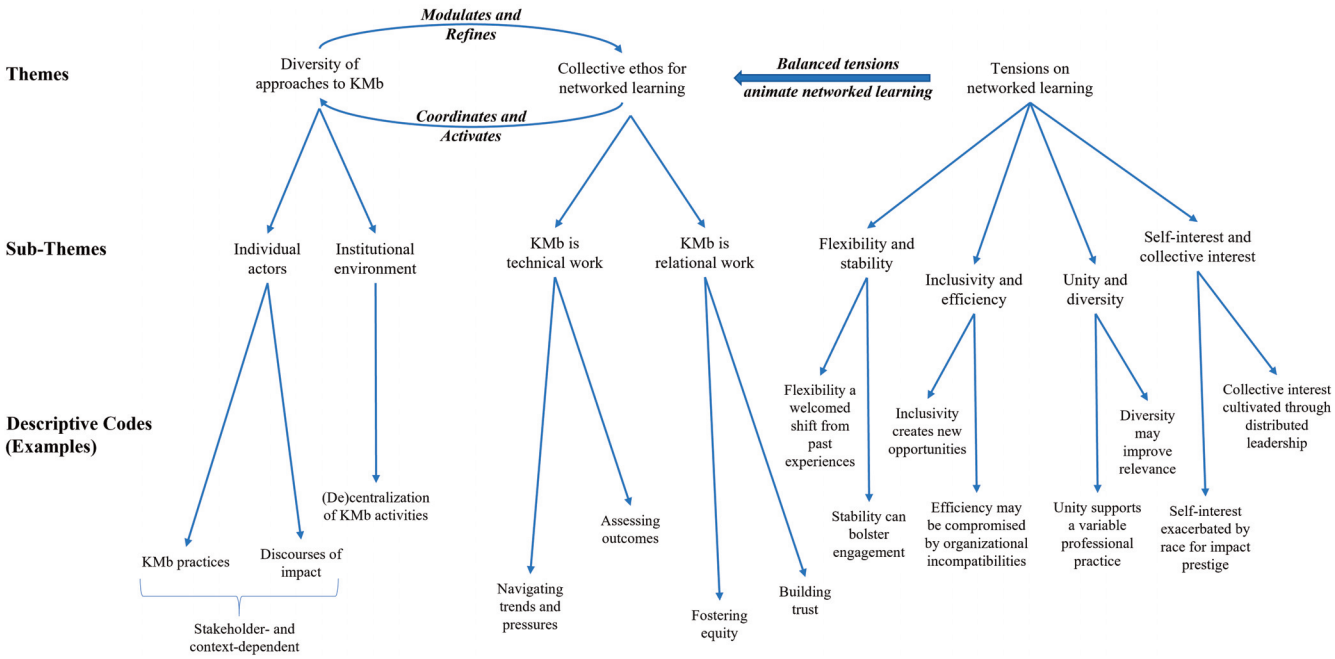
Consistent with the DE approach, the research team employed an iterative analytic procedure to co-create meaning from the data, incorporating multiple feedback loops with RIC actors to inform ongoing adaptation. Initially, the lead author and another KMb researcher independently applied the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Boeije, 2002) to five interviews. Following Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach, they examined, compared, conceptualized, and categorized the data. Through repeated reading, memoing, and identifying patterns, the analysis progressed from descriptive codes to categories of consolidated meaning and, finally, to core themes (Thomas, 2006). Process coding and structural coding (Saldaña, 2015) were emphasized, with process coding using gerunds to capture facilitation actions and structural coding applying relevant theoretical concepts.

The research team drew on the i-PARIHS framework to provide sensitizing concepts (Bowen, 2006) rather than a strict coding scheme. The data were not coded directly to the constructs (innovation, recipients, context), but the analysts remained alert to how these elements shaped KMb processes. For example, when participants described novel KMb approaches (innovation) or diverse stakeholder motivations (recipients), the analysts considered how facilitators aligned these elements with the broader institutional environment (context), using i-PARIHS concepts to sharpen interpretations. This approach ensured that the coding emerged organically from the data while the i-PARIHS framework helped identify salient patterns and relationships relevant to networked learning and capacity building (see Kitson & Harvey, 2016).

In early May 2020, the lead author shared preliminary insights with the RIC Network Director to consider how emergent findings might be integrated into existing processes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, broader stakeholder involvement was initially postponed. In the interim, the lead author completed coding all remaining transcripts, met regularly with the Network Director, and, in July 2020, presented an early draft of findings to the RIC Evaluation Committee. The committee's feedback prompted the re-coding of all transcripts to capture new areas of interest and refine major themes.

Revised findings were shared with the broader RIC membership (N = 39) at the annual general meeting in September 2020 to elicit questions and guide follow-up inquiries. This iterative process continued with the Evaluation Committee (November 2020, January 2021), the Steering Committee (March 2021), and the Governance Committee (April 2021), aligning with Preskill and Beer's (2012) notion of "ongoing sense-making activities." This cycle of interpretation, synthesis, and recommendation generation ensured that the emergent themes reflected the complexity of implementing and supporting KMb at scale. Unless indicated otherwise, participants are distinguished in illustrative quotations using randomly assigned institution placeholders (e.g., A, B) and participant numbers (e.g., A1, A2).

Figure 1: Overview of the coding process



Findings

As stated above, the findings centre on the facilitation construct of the i-PARiHS framework. Three overarching themes surfaced in the analysis: a) the diversity of approaches to KMb, b) the network's ethos for networked learning, and c) key tensions for networked learning. Figure 1 serves as a visual synthesis of these three themes, illustrating their interconnections and collective role in enabling facilitation within RIC's evolving network. Specifically, it shows how diversity in KMb approaches, the collective ethos, and key tensions influence the network's capacity to coordinate and activate expertise. At the same time, networked learning in facilitation can only occur when key tensions on the network and its members are balanced.

Diversity of approaches to KMb

The RIC membership, both individuals and their respective institutions, displayed considerable diversity in their facilitation of KMb. At the individual level, each participant employed different professional skills and competencies depending on their professional roles and interests, the types of knowledge being mobilized, and the relevant audiences and their contexts. When asked about their primary job functions related to KMb, participants expressed how the answer "depends on the day" (A1), "depends on the [KMb] question that is asked" (K1), and "depends on what the project is … [and] who you're working with" (C1). Such contextual dependence meant that individuals generally found it challenging to import insights from one project to another. In the words of an experienced network member, "it's just so complex and messy and relationship based" (I1). For individual actors, facilitative actions rarely unfolded in predictable ways within a single local or organizational context; this variability expanded considerably across networked universities.

Another area in which individual diversity emerged was language. Although 17 participants reported using KMb as a primary concept in their work, each of those individuals also discussed how they would modify their language depending on the context and other actors involved. In this way, their *discourses of impact* (Wróblewska, 2021) were flexible, much like their practices. When asked about the reason for this flexibility, one participant shared their belief that the term KMb "is not great, it sounds weird. Nobody knows what it really means, but it's an invitation to start that conversation about, 'what does it actually mean to you and to your work?'" (H1). While others echoed this point about KMb—that "it could be a bit more intuitive" (H2)—they nonetheless found it provided "an infrastructure" (E1) for discussing the diverse ways of facilitating KMb. It provided a kind of meta-theoretical language (Ostrom, 2005) for the network: a set of theoretical and practical elements, including frameworks, models, strategies, and the relationships between them.

At the institutional level, participants described their own experiences working within varying degrees of centralization in their universities' KMb infrastructure. Fourteen participants reported that their institutions relied on a primarily centralized approach to KMb, wherein expertise and resources were concentrated in a dedicated unit or team. In describing their personal experiences, participants working in these settings generally felt that centralized models allowed them to more easily coordinate events and services, drawing from a common repository of skills and knowledge.

One participant emphasized how centralization closed a connectivity gap, explaining from their perspective that "centralized roles and departments offered a means for closing 'a gap in terms of connectivity between the key players in this realm'" (M1). These comments reflected participants' lived experiences navigating centralized models, rather than abstract opinions, as they recounted specific instances in which top-down structures facilitated communication and resource sharing.

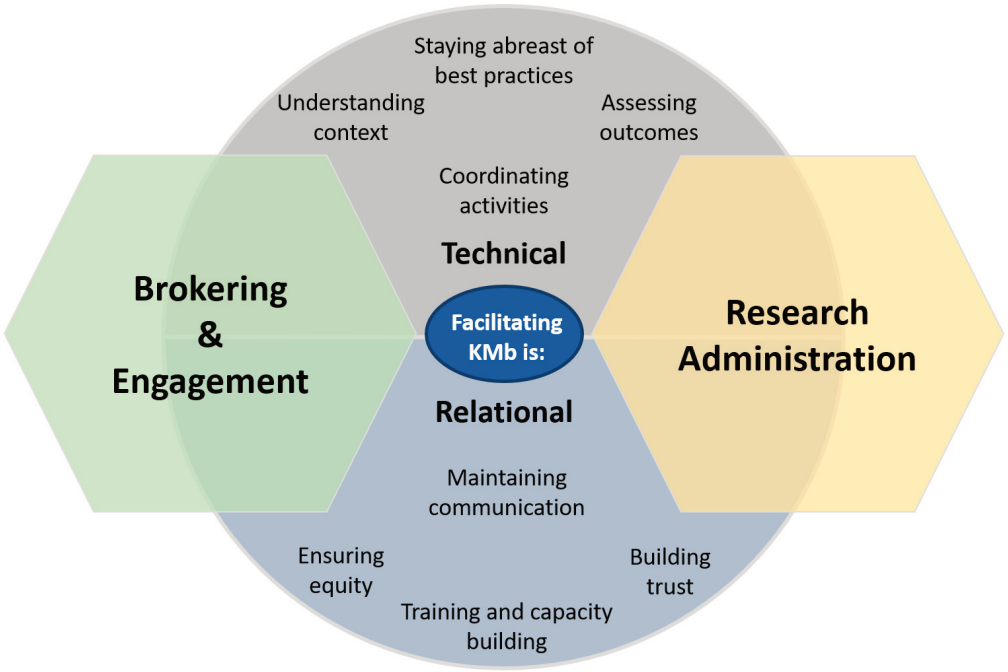
By contrast, participants who worked in more decentralized environments described their firsthand challenges in determining who was responsible for what and ensuring that resources were not duplicated. For example, one participant working in a university with multiple, scattered KMb efforts explained, "One of the issues that always comes up is … it's hard to know who is doing what, working with who … The coordination of that is a challenge" (H1). This participant's experience underscored how decentralization, while potentially enabling more tailored and locally responsive KMb efforts, could also create confusion and fragmentation based on their direct involvement in day-to-day activities.

Viewed alongside RIC's ongoing growth, the diversity of individuals and institutions has created a situation of increasing complexity for networked learning. Nevertheless, while such complexity might seem to create the potential for network fragmentation, all participants reported a strong commitment to the network.

Collective ethos for networked learning

To understand how networked learning supported participants' facilitation of KMb, the authors focus on the network's ethos—its characteristic identity and values. Figure 2 depicts two broad, interconnected constructs within this ethos: the technical and relational dimensions of KMb facilitation. Drawing on participants' detailed accounts, this subsection clarifies each construct and how it informed their views and experiences related to "impact."

Figure 2: An ethos for networked learning for knowledge mobilization professionals



On the technical dimension, facilitating KMb regularly entailed high levels of uncertainty about how to achieve desirable outcomes. In describing the complex nature of their work, multiple participants referenced popular KMb and impact competency frameworks. However, they also explained that KMb further called upon conceptually abstract expertise: "it's personality, it's being opportunistic, it's following your gut, it's being a good human being" (L1). Each project, or indeed each interaction with researchers and other stakeholders, required a particular combination of traits, competencies, and ethical considerations. And yet, even the more experienced facilitators underscored that successful outcomes were never guaranteed for any particular approach. One experienced participant shared that situational analysis was at least as important for their institution's KMb services, which "are very specifically tailored for different audiences … we always very carefully look at who is the audience and what is the best way to reach them" (F1). While selecting the "best way" might initially seem purely technical—choosing between a podcast, a blog, or a digital story—it also demands a relational understanding of the audience's values, needs, and cultural contexts. In this sense, technical choices are informed by relational insights that ensure strategies genuinely resonate with intended communities.

Some participants found the requirements of this work overwhelming:

> Sometimes I don't have the capacities or the experience, or even the expertise to be of some use. That's the biggest challenge. I'm like, "Okay, this is out of my … I should not be here," or "there's something I really don't understand about knowledge mobilization." So, yeah, there's a real discomfort and I must admit to not fake things. (K1)

Moreover, it was not only the present circumstances that made for complex work; participants also discussed the ever-changing scope of what was valued in KMb. For example, as calls for more evaluation have intensified, participants reported a sense of urgency to develop capacity in "promoting and developing some knowledge mobilization or research impact assessment tools" (B2). They also emphasized the difficulty of working with KMb topics undergoing rapid development (e.g., co-creation), where staying abreast of best practices was difficult.

The technical requirements of RIC members' work also surfaced in how they respond to and steer trends for how researchers and stakeholders seek to connect:

> For a while, everybody had a blog. Now everybody wants to do a podcast. Now everybody wants to do digital stories. So, what do you mean by that? What are you doing it for? Now you have a YouTube channel … you and 2 billion other people. And sometimes there is a very good reason to have short videos to explain certain things, because you have the perfect audience to engage with those videos. But don't do something because it looks cool; do it because it's actually the best way to do it. (F1)

In this way, technical skills alone were not sufficient for facilitating KMb. Participants were adamant about the additional importance of emotional and social capacity in that any activity to increase the relevance or use of research must be chosen with an understanding of why it is likely to generate desirable outcomes within the specific

context and with the specific audiences. Here, the relational dimension comes into sharper focus, as it involves building trust, fostering equitable partnerships, and ensuring that community knowledge is recognized and valued rather than treated as subordinate.

Developing expertise as a professional KMb facilitator thus equally hinged on its relational dimension. Even though participants shared that developing relational capacity had until recently taken a subordinate role to technical capacity, this imbalance was righting. As one participant explained when reflecting on changes in the profession over recent years, "we are starting to see the relational aspect of it . . . the interactions between people and people, between institution and institution, between sector and sector" (H2). And more than merely interacting, participants were actively sowing the seeds for KMb as "an approach and a way of engaging in which the partners and parties have equitable power relationships and decision making and really have a shared agenda and move forward together" (J1). In other words, while the technical dimension foregrounds the "how" of KMb (selecting formats, platforms, or evaluative tools), the relational dimension foregrounds the "who" and "why," emphasizing interpersonal connections, ethical considerations, and mutual learning. This relational lens ensures that technical strategies are not just efficiently executed, but also meaningfully embedded in the social and cultural contexts where knowledge is mobilized. Over time, as equity and genuine co-creation gain prominence, the relational dimension becomes ever more critical to sustaining the network's ethos and its pursuit of positive research impact.

In the feedback loops that were critical to this work, participants shared how equity in KMb (e.g., grappling with the longstanding issue of service user and community knowledge being treated as subordinate to research; see Ward, 2017) was now a prominent focus for RIC and would complement its efforts to enrich members' professional capacity. As a network involving facilitators with varied levels of mastery in both technical and relational aspects, their differences spur opportunities for shared learning and growth. It is this variance that establishes the value proposition of networked learning.

Tensions on networked learning

Multiple tensions appeared to influence the internal working of RIC, and similar to the cross-sector collaborations literature (see Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015), it appeared that a balance in fluctuating tensions created a generative environment for networked learning.

Flexibility and stability

Participants expressed that a critical strength of RIC has been its ability to remain dynamic despite an expanding and diversifying membership. Whereas participants shared that some of their other professional groups and networks tended to ossify over time, particularly in response to top-down organizational characteristics, RIC effectively balanced essential structures with emergent needs. One participant commented how they appreciated "the sense of looseness in the network" and went on to suggest that "formalizing things too much would put pressure on some of our

member institutions who are smaller and have fewer resources" (F1). Multiple participants similarly expressed their appreciation for the network's "informal space" (L1) that "helps draw out tacit knowledge and share it" (E1). Network flexibility was thus a strength not only in providing a welcomed shift from past experiences of institutional rigidity in KMb (e.g., a persistent focus on knowledge products) but also in setting up the network to handle exogenous shocks (Bryson et al., 2015), such as those resulting from shifting policy environments for how impact is valued and assessed in Canada.

Simultaneously, participants contemplated whether the ever-expanding network might benefit from additional structures to mitigate endogenous shocks—instabilities in how members interact or find common ground. However, concerns about this possibility were relatively peripheral, and participants' proposed solutions centred on improving current learning opportunities rather than sweeping structural changes. As one interviewee put it:

> The first thing we could do … is create a more fulsome schedule for folks to meet and interact. … As opposed to trying to dream of something bigger or better, let's fill up the existing buckets, and then critically assess how they are working. (H2)

Other participants largely affirmed this perspective, highlighting that gradual evolution—structural and process changes aligned with the network's vision while avoiding alienation or the growth of power dynamics—would bolster rather than deteriorate member engagement and commitment.

Openness and efficiency

Related to bolstering engagement, RIC was also grappling with the tension of expanding its parameters of network membership while ensuring efficient operation. As international regard for the network has grown, so has an interest in membership among Canadian and international organizations concerned with KMb. Participants extolled the virtues of a broadened membership that includes other types of organizations (e.g., nonprofits) to increase the overall pool of KMb resources and expertise. Speaking from experience in the non-profit sector, one participant felt "it would allow RIC to be a lot more agile and responsive" (G1) to the needs of its members' target audiences. Another described how it might "raise the baseline for people to actively engage" (H2), implying that a greater number and variety of network members could stimulate KMb advocacy efforts and more ambitious network activities. On the latter, for example, some participants suggested that a broadened membership might enable opportunities such as regional branches or meetings as well as more locally relevant opportunities to "share, test, and pilot ideas, and to be challenged" (K2). However, an increasingly diverse membership was not viewed without costs.

Participants felt that any increased access to resources, material or social, would be moot without the deep engagement needed to harness them. With more varied concerns, interests, and needs, they raised questions about the network's ability to "go deep into the experience that the other institutions have on certain topics" (B2). Similarly, some concerns surfaced about the potentially incompatible operations of non-university members: "commercial partners agenda changes very quickly. So,

something which may be a priority for them this year, may suddenly go off the scene altogether next year" (D1). Again, the common sentiment was that gradual evolution would help ensure a balance between a broader membership and network efficiency.

Unity and diversification

In reflecting on the network's structure, participants proposed the idea of practice-based subgroups as one approach to managing their varied interests. They suggested that such subgroups could allow members with common interests (e.g., knowledge brokering) to delve deeper into evidence-informed practices. One participant explained, as a consideration for the future, that these subgroups might yield "a group of experts" (A1) who could support newcomers or less experienced members. Another participant speculated that such subgroups would offer "more straightforward points of entry" (I1) into the network for novices. Here, participants were theorizing rather than describing a current state, envisioning how such subgroups could enrich their learning and practice. At the same time, others voiced concerns, based on their current workload and roles, that subgroups might introduce added complexity without sufficient capacity, cautioning that "by creating yet another layer … to what extent will this work or provide some value?" (H2). In this regard, participants balanced aspirational ideas with the practical experiences they navigated in the network.

Self-interest and collective interest

Finally, building upon the theme of maintaining cohesion, RIC managed the tension between its networked and institutional governance systems, characterized by *co-opetition*: "the joint and simultaneous occurrence of cooperation and competition across functional areas" (Chiambaretto, Massé, & Mirc, 2019, p. 584). On the side of self-interest, the network comprises "such different institutions … which most of the time are in competition … for grants, for visibility, for attention from the government" (K2). Although RIC members expressed commitment to the network's vision, they were principally committed to their respective organizational and local contexts. This tension was perhaps best illustrated by a participant who stated, "although the RIC network is probably my most important network … if there is something going on in the province that I have to do, I will dedicate time to that before I dedicate time to RIC" (F1). Participants further mentioned how the growing appetite for impact embroiled their universities in a *competition fetish* (Naidoo, 2016). Several respondents noted, for example, the international prestige now conferred by performance assessments, such as the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

Conversely, on the side of collective interest, participants displayed shared awareness that "the work that we're all doing helps to build the collective expertise around knowledge mobilization, especially in Canada" (H1), signifying a "more of a collective impact approach" (B2). Tying back to RIC's ethos for networked learning, the network's collective orientation was able to mitigate institutional competition in that it is "very much a grassroots organization … developing based on people's interest, and that's how we're gaining momentum" (B1). To cultivate this collective orientation, RIC embraces a distributed approach to leadership reliant on various instrumental and

expressive relations and structured and unstructured interactions. By inviting but not requiring involvement in the network's various committees and initiatives, each individual felt their perspectives were valued and professional constraints recognized. For instance, one participant described the network's decision-making processes as "an open and trusting space … [in which] we hear each other, we hear the problems that the others have … we realize that we are not alone" (K2). Notwithstanding such favourable views, it was suggested that the long-term benefits of the network would require continually revisiting the possibilities of networked learning against ever-rising expectations of institutional competition.

Discussion

The findings of this article contribute to the paucity of empirical research on how universities can build capacity in KMb. We focused on understanding the perspectives and experiences of the professionals working within universities who facilitate KMb and their professional networks that aim to build capacity at scale. This focus is pertinent given that little is known about the work of these individuals in support of universities pursuing societal impacts from research; they are what Watermeyer and Rowe (2021) called "ghosts in the machine" (p. 11). By interrogating RIC's approach to networked learning and co-creating insights about the membership's acquired expertise, the authors aimed to inform not only the work of networks with a similar remit but also the future directions of RIC itself. To that end, we return to the research questions, followed by RIC management's response to the findings.

Networked learning and facilitating KMb

Notwithstanding the various admonitions voiced by KMb and impact scholars (e.g., Cain et al., 2018; Chubb & Watermeyer, 2017), impact is "a phenomenon emerging from much broader and longer-term change to HE [higher education]" (Pearce & Evans, 2018, p. 359). Impact is and seemingly will continue to grow as a core aspect of research systems (Budtz Pedersen et al., 2020; Wróblewska, 2021), whether driven by individual agency or collective action (Reed & Fazey, 2021). However, how does the drive for impact become a coherent part of what universities do rather than another function contributing to the *structural accretion* (Fischman, Anderson, Tefera, & Zuiker, 2018) encumbering countless institutions? Should knowledge of how to achieve impact fall to already beleaguered academic faculty? Or should university staff with a history of supporting traditional approaches to KMb (e.g., technology transfer) be conscripted into new areas of work? Such questions, in our view, have no simple answer. Academic faculty and students play a critical role in KMb (Kokshagina et al., 2021), and university staff in more traditional KMb roles will likely remain crucial drivers of impact. However, our study lends support to the position that dedicated institutional roles and units can help meet the demands of facilitating KMb, as evidenced by participants' accounts of navigating different organizational structures, and that networked learning is important to support these roles and units.

Participants' descriptions of their varied day-to-day experiences showed how facilitating KMb could not be separated from the institutional contexts in which they

worked. Facilitation called upon specialized technical and relational expertise as well as opportunities for professional learning and a supportive organizational culture. Participants' narratives highlighted how these competencies were needed to adapt to local circumstances and emerging challenges. Against the wider backdrop of limited understanding of and institutional readiness for KMb, the complexity of participants' work necessitated a strong reliance on their professional networks. Their accounts also illustrated that this reliance was not just theoretical; they drew on their network's collective knowledge to address real-time challenges and refine their practices. Research Impact Caanda, through its ethos for networked learning, has provided networked members with several noteworthy benefits. First, the network helps its members overcome the apparent disconnect between KMb theory and practice:

> … the ironic situation that the field of knowledge mobilisation practice seems somewhat detached from its own knowledge base, with knowledge mobilisation activities often being developed and carried out without reference to the existing theory or to practical experience, and without the robust evaluations that could contribute to the knowledge base for the future. (Powell et al., 2017, p. 217)

By sharing and documenting what approaches and activities have worked in different practice contexts and why, participants could draw upon an *organizational memory* (Belkhodja, Amara, Landry, & Ouimet, 2007) far exceeding that available through individual experience or knowledge of the research literature. Second, empirical guidance on institutional infrastructure to support KMb is still limited, despite some recent examples (e.g., MacGregor, Phipps, Edwards, Portes, & Kyffin, 2022; Benneworth et al., 2018; Cvitanovic, Löf, Norström, & Reed, 2018), the network enables collective learning about how different institutional structures can impel or impede the drive for impact. Notably, participants' reflections on centralized versus decentralized models underscored how different approaches shaped their actual work experiences and informed their understanding of effective strategies. Third, the network constitutes a *de facto* "network of networks" (see D'Agostino & Scala, 2014), in which each member's personal connections to other KMb practitioners and scholars expand the overall pool of resources. While preliminary in understanding the impacts of professional networks such as RIC, these benefits appear consistent with those observed in discipline-specific areas of KMb (e.g., Brown & Poortman, 2018; Ward et al., 2018).

Structuring networked learning for KMb

The insights from this study are more tentative regarding the structure of networked learning to improve the use of KMb concepts in practice. As Benneworth et al. (2018) note, "higher education institutions are themselves extremely complex organisations" (p. 137), signifying there will be inevitable uncertainty and disagreement within universities about facilitating KMb, let alone among multiple universities in a network. Nonetheless, it seems likely that networks espousing objectives similar to RIC will need to balance four primary tensions if they are to improve universities' capacity to achieve impact: 1) flexibility and stability, 2) openness and efficiency, 3) unity and diversification, and 4) self-interest and collective interest. Participants' discussions

of potential practice-based subgroups, for example, revealed how members grappled with whether and how more specialized structures could emerge in ways that would tangibly benefit their work. While further research is needed to understand the mechanisms (i.e., the resources and reasoning; see Pawson & Tilley, 1997) through which networked learning can best equip KMb professionals for the demands of facilitative work, giving attention to these tensions offers a favourable starting point.

Considering the introduction of performance assessment into research contexts such as Ontario, as well as the growing performance expectations within the higher education sector (e.g., Budtz Pedersen et al., 2012; Hicks, 2012), there is reason to believe researchers and universities may increasingly find themselves between the blurred lines of assessment-driven and mission-driven systems for achieving impact (see MacGregor & Phipps, 2020). The value of networked learning in the face of such systems change is clear cut; many structural changes to universities regarding KMb and impact remain uncharted territory, with little empirical research to inform strategic decision-making. In this regard, networks like RIC are critical not only in building the capacities universities need to function effectively in light of the impact agenda but also in galvanizing action to ensure research policy meets societal needs. However, research systems, like all social systems, "are dynamic and constantly changing" (Best & Holmes, 2010, p. 148), so embedded networks and their strategic priorities must also evolve.

Moreover, the very concept of "impact" merits further interrogation: future research could explore which actors are empowered to define impact, whose voices remain excluded, and how these definitions might shape the benefits (or costs) for different communities. Such work would complement our findings about local, national, and global challenges by foregrounding questions of equity and inclusivity in how impact is measured and pursued.

To that end, Table 1 outlines RIC's management response to the findings of this DE, incorporating the current article and the results from the first phase (MacGregor & Phipps, 2020). It specifies strategic priorities the network will operationalize in the short term to benefit its membership, with immediate emphasis on the top three priorities. Further research will map how the initiatives associated with these priorities continue to create value for RIC's member institutions. Future research is also needed to build upon the findings presented herein about how networked learning can enable universities to better tackle local, national, and global challenges.

Table 1: Strategic priorities for the RIC network to benefit the membership

Rank	# Votes	Priority	Description
1	5	Forum for senior decision-makers	Creating a forum to raise awareness of RIC membership and KMb on member campuses. Currently, senior RIC executives (i.e., VPs Research) are engaged only when new members are approved and when they receive the annual report.
Tied for 2nd	3	Institutional strategic KMb planning	Developing tools and training to help institutions with strategic planning for KMb and research impact.

Table 1 (continued)

Rank	# Votes	Priority	Description
Tied for 2nd	3	Member presentations at monthly meeting	Inviting a different member to present on their institutional KMb practice at each monthly meeting so that members can learn about and from one another.
3	2	Yaffle for RIC	Adapting Yaffle (www.yaffle.ca), which provides a database of researcher expertise and research projects, so that RIC members can benefit from improved access to each other and practice-based tools.
Tied for 4	1	Practice-based subgroups	Creating informal groups of RIC members based on primary role (e.g., grants administration, librarian, research communications, community engagement).
Tied for 4	1	Grow the profession	Professionalizing KMb by creating standards, training, and accreditation.
5	0	Teaching KMb	Focusing on how to teach the broad skills and functions encompassed by KMb.

Note: Members of RIC's Evaluation Committee each cast three votes (or abstained) on potential strategic priorities for the network.

Limitations

Despite the contributions of this study, there are several limitations to note. First, this study focused on a single network, RIC, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other contexts or disciplines. Second, we relied on self-reported perspectives of RIC members, which could introduce biases related to social desirability or limited recall. Finally, our emphasis on a developmental evaluation approach means that the network's evolving nature may pose challenges for making definitive claims about long-term outcomes. By acknowledging these limitations, we encourage readers to consider how these insights align with the conditions, opportunities, and constraints of their own local KMb and networked learning contexts.

Conclusion

There is potential for the growing emphasis on impact to improve how universities and other research organizations interface with society. However, there is also potential for the preoccupations with impact to adversely affect the research enterprise by constricting academic freedom, promoting audit culture, and advancing managerial control (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2017; MacDonald, 2017). Navigating this complex landscape to create healthy impact cultures (Reed & Fazey, 2021) and institutions (MacGregor & Phipps, 2019) will require skilled and well-connected professionals.

Acknowledgements

This article draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Notes

1. Medians are reported rather than means, as these measures of professional experience exhibited non-normal distributions.

2. The interview guide and coding scheme are available by contacting the lead author.

References

Adams, W.C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In K.E. Newcomer, H.P. Hatry, & J.S. Wholey (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (4th ed.), (pp. 492–505). Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.

Best, A., & Holmes, B. (2010). Systems thinking, knowledge and action: Towards better models and methods. *Evidence & Policy, 6*(2), 145–159. doi:10.1332/174426410X502284

Bednarek, A.T., Wyborn, C., Cvitanovic, C., Meyer, R., Colvin, R.M., et al. (2018). Boundary spanning at the science–policy interface: The practitioners' perspectives. *Sustainability Science, 13*(4), 1175–1183. doi:10.1007/s11625-018-0550-9

Belkhodja, O., Amara, N., Landry, R., & Ouimet, M. (2007). The extent and organizational determinants of research utilization in Canadian health services organizations. *Science Communication, 28*(3), 377–417. doi:10.1177/1075547006298486

Benneworth, P., Ćulum, B., Farnell, T., Kaiser, F., Seeber, M., Ščukanec, N., Vossensteyn, H., & Westerheijden, D. (2018). *Mapping and critical synthesis of current state-of-the-art on community engagement in higher education*. Zagreb, Croatia: Institute for the Development of Education.

Boeije, H. (2002). A purposeful approach to the constant comparative method. *Quality & Quantity, 36*(4), 391–409.

Bogenschneider, K. (2018). Positioning universities as honest knowledge brokers: Best practices for communicating research to policymakers. *Family Relations,* 1–16. doi:10.1111/fare.12339

Bowen, G.A. (2006). Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5*(3), 12–23. doi:10.1177/160940690600500304

Brown, C., & Poortman, C.L. (Eds.). (2018). *Networks for learning: Effective collaboration for teacher, school and system improvement*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bryson, J.M., Crosby, B.C., & Stone, M.M. (2015). Designing and implementing cross-sector collaborations: Needed and challenging. *Public Administration Review, 75*(5), 647–663. doi:10.1111/puar.12432

Budtz Pedersen, D., Grønvad, J.F., & Hvidtfeldt, R. (2020). Methods for mapping the impact of social sciences and humanities—A literature review. *Research Evaluation, 29*(1), 4–21. doi:10.1093/reseval/rvz033

Cain, K., Shore, K., Weston, C., & Sanders, C.B. (2018). Knowledge mobilization as a tool of institutional governance: Exploring academics' perceptions of "going public." *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 48*(2), 39–54. doi:10.7202/1057102ar

Calhoun, C. (2006). The university and the public good. *Thesis Eleven, 84*(1), 7–43. doi:10.1177/0725513606060516

Carl, J., & Menter, M. (2021). The social impact of universities: assessing the effects of the three university missions on social engagement. *Studies in Higher Education, 46*(5), 965–976. doi:10.1080/03075079.2021.1896803

Chiambaretto, P., Massé, D., & Mirc, N. (2019). "All for one and one for all?" Knowledge broker roles in managing tensions of internal coopetition: The Ubisoft case. *Research Policy, 48*(3), 584–600. doi:10.1016/j.respol.2018.10.009

Chubb, J., & Watermeyer, R. (2017). Artifice or integrity in the marketization of research impact? Investigating the moral economy of (pathways to) impact statements within research funding proposals in the UK and Australia. *Studies in Higher Education, 42*(12), 2360–2372. doi:10.1080/03075079.2016.1144182

Cooper, A. (2014). Knowledge mobilisation in education across Canada: A cross-case analysis of 44 research brokering organizations. *Evidence & Policy, 10*, 29–59. doi:10.1332/174426413X662806

Cooper, A., & Levin, B. (2010). Some Canadian contributions to understanding knowledge mobilisation. *Evidence & Policy, 6*(3), 351–369. doi:10.1332/174426410X524839

Cooper, A., Rodway, J., & Read, R. (2018). Knowledge mobilization practices of educational researchers across Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 48*(1), 1–21. http://journals.sfu.ca/cjhe/index.php/cjhe [October 19, 2020].

Cranley, L.A., Cummings, G.G., Profetto-McGrath, J., Toth, F., & Estabrooks, C.A. (2017). Facilitation roles and characteristics associated with research use by healthcare professionals: A scoping review. *BMJ Open*, *7*(8), 1–18. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2016-014384

Cvitanovic, C., Löf, M.F., Norström, A.V, & Reed, M.S. (2018). Building university-based boundary organisations that facilitate impacts on environmental policy and practice. *Plos One*, *13*(9), e0203752. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0203752

D'Agostino, G., & Scala, A. (Eds). (2014). *Networks of networks: The last frontier of complexity*. New York, NY: Springer.

Davies, H.T., Powell, A.E., & Nutley, S.M. (2015). Mobilising knowledge to improve UK health care: Learning from other countries and other sectors — a multimethod mapping study. *Health Services and Delivery Research, 3*(27). doi:10.3310/hsdr03270

Fischman, G.E., Anderson, K.T., Tefera, A.A., & Zuiker, S.J. (2018). If mobilizing educational research is the answer, who can afford to ask the question? An analysis of faculty perspectives on knowledge mobilization for scholarship in education. *AERA Open*, *4*(1), 1–17. doi:10.1177/2332858417750133

Glaser, B.G., & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. London, UK: Aldine Publishing.

Hall, B., & Tandon, R. (Eds). (2021). *Socially responsible higher education: International perspectives on knowledge democracy*. Leiden, NL: Brill.

Harvey, G., & Kitson, A. (2016). PARIHS revisited: From heuristic to integrated framework for the successful implementation of knowledge into practice. *Implementation Science*, *11*(1). doi:10.1186/s13012-016-0398-2

Hicks, D. (2012). Performance-based university research funding systems. *Research Policy*, *41*(2), 251–261. doi:10.1016/j.respol.2011.09.007

Holmes, B., & Straus, S. (2019). Using evidence in Canada. In A. Boaz, H. Davies, A. Fraser, & S. Nutley (Eds.), *What works now? Evidence-informed policy and practice* (pp. 337–350). Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Jessani, N.S., Babcock, C., Siddiqi, S., Davey-Rothwell, M., Ho, S., & Holtgrave, D.R. (2018). Relationships between public health faculty and decision makers at four governmental levels: A social network analysis. *Evidence and Policy, 14*(3), 499–522. doi:10.1332/174426418X15230282334424

Kalbarczyk, A., Rodriguez, D.C., Mahendradhata, Y., Sarker, M., Seme, A., et al. (2021). Barriers and facilitators to knowledge translation activities within academic institutions in low- and middle-income countries. *Health Policy and Planning, 36*(5), 728–739. doi:10.1093/heapol/czaa188

Kitson, A.L., & Harvey, G. (2016). Methods to succeed in effective knowledge translation in clinical practice. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, *48*(3), 294–302. doi:10.1111/jnu.12206

Kitson, A., Harvey, G., & McCormack, B. (1998). Enabling the implementation of evidence based practice: A conceptual framework. *Quality in Health Care*, *7*(3), 149–158. doi:10.1136/qshc.7.3.149

Kitson, A.L., Rycroft-Malone, J., Harvey, G., McCormack, B., Seers, K., & Titchen, A. (2008). Evaluating the successful implementation of evidence into practice using the PARiHS framework: Theoretical and practical challenges. *Implementation Science, 3*(1), 1–12. doi:10.1186/1748-5908-3-1

Kokshagina, O., Rickards, L., Steele, W., & Moraes, O. (2021). Futures literacy for research impact in universities. *Futures, 132*. doi:10.1016/j.futures.2021.102803

Laredo, P. (2007). Revisiting the third mission of universities: Toward a renewed categorization of university activities? *Higher Education Policy*, *20*(4), 441–456. doi:10.1057/palgrave.hep.8300169

MacDonald, R. (2017). "Impact", research and slaying zombies: The pressures and possibilities of the REF. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 37*(11–12), 696–710. doi:10.1108/IJSSP-04-2016-0047

MacGregor, S., & Phipps, D. (2020). How a networked approach to building capacity in knowledge mobilization supports research impact. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership, 16*(6), 1–22. doi:10.22230/ijepl.2020v16n6a949

MacGregor, S., Phipps, J., Edwards, C.M., Portes, V, & Kyffin, J. (2022). Institutionally embedded professionals' perspectives on knowledge mobilization: Findings from a developmental evaluation. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 51*(3), 145–162. doi:10.47678/cjhe.vi0.189103

McKean, M., & Robbins, M. (2016). *Beyond citations: Knowledge mobilization, research impact, and the changing nature of academic work*. Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada.

Miller, K., Mcadam, M., & Mcadam, R. (2014). The changing university business model: A stakeholder perspective. *R&D Management*, *44*(3), 265–287. doi:10.1111/radm.12064

Ministry of Colleges and Universities. (2021). *College and university strategic mandate agreements*. https://www.ontario.ca/page/all-college-and-university-strategic-mandate-agreements [June 1, 2018].

Naidoo, R. (2016). The competition fetish in higher education: Varieties, animators and consequences. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 37*(1), 1–10. doi:10.1080/01425692.2015.1116209

Naidorf, J. (2014). Knowledge utility: From social relevance to knowledge mobilization. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *22*, 1–27. doi:10.14507/epaa.v22n89.2014

Naylor, C.D., Birgeneau, R.J., Crago, M., Lazaridis, M., Malacrida, C., et al. (2017). *Investing in Canada's future: Strengthening the foundations of Canadian research*. Government of Canada. https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.839290/publication.html [September 1, 2018].

Neal, J.W., Neal, Z.P., & Brutzman, B. (2021). Defining brokers, intermediaries, and boundary spanners: A systematic review. *Evidence & Policy*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1332/174426420X16083745764324

Nguyen, T., Graham, I.D., Mrklas, K.J., Bowen, S., Cargo, M., et al. (2020). How does integrated knowledge translation (IKT) compare to other collaborative research approaches to generating and translating knowledge? Learning from experts in the field. *Health Research Policy and Systems, 18*, 1–20. doi:10.1186/s12961-020-0539-6

Ostrom, E. (2005). *Understanding institutional diversity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M.Q. (2011). *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Patton, M.Q. (2016a). State of the art and practice of developmental evaluation: Answers to common and recurring questions. In M.Q. Patton, K. McKegg, & N. Wehipeihana (Eds.), *Developmental evaluation exemplars: Principles in practice*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Patton, M.Q. (2016b). What is essential in developmental evaluation? On integrity, fidelity, adultery, abstinence, impotence, long-term commitment, integrity, and sensitivity in implementing evaluation models. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *37*(2), 250–265. doi:10.1177/1098214015626295

Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). An introduction to scientific realist evaluation. In E. Chelimsky & W. R. Shadish (Eds.), *Evaluation for the 21st century: A handbook* (pp. 405–418). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781483348896.n29

Pearce, S., & Evans, D. (2018). The rise of impact in academia: Repackaging a long-standing idea. *British Politics*, *13*(3), 348–360. doi:10.1057/s41293-018-0079-7

Penny Cooper & Associates. (2017). *MSFHR knowledge translation evaluation framework*. Vancouver, Canada: Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research.

Phillippi, J., & Lauderdale, J. (2018). A guide to field notes for qualitative research: Context and Conversation. *Qualitative Health Research, 28*(3), 381–388. doi:10.1177/1049732317697102

Powell, A., Davies, H., & Nutley, S. (2017). Missing in action? The role of the knowledge mobilisation literature in developing knowledge mobilisation practices. *Evidence & Policy*, *13*(2), 201–223. doi:10.1332/174426416X14534671325644

Powell, A., Davies, H.T.O., & Nutley, S.M. (2018). Facing the challenges of research-informed knowledge mobilization: 'Practising what we preach'? *Public Administration*, *96*(1), 36–52. doi:10.1111/padm.12365

Preskill, H., & Beer, T. (2012). *Evaluating social innovation*. Washington, DC: Center for Evaluation Innovation.

Reale, E., Avramov, D., Canhial, K., Donovan, C., Flecha, R., Holm, P., et al. (2018). A review of literature on evaluating the scientific, social and political impact of social sciences and humanities research. *Research Evaluation, 27*(4), 298–208. doi:10.1093/reseval/rvx025

Reed, M.S., & Fazey, I. (2021). Impact culture: Transforming how universities tackle twenty first century challenges. *Frontiers in Sustainability*, *2*. doi:10.3389/frsus.2021.662296

Reed, M.S., Ferré, M., Martin-Ortega, J., Blanche, R., Lawford-Rolfe, R., Dallimer, M., & Holden, J. (2021). Evaluating impact from research: A methodological framework. *Research Policy*, *50*, 1–14. doi:10.1016/j.repolx.2020.100012

Research Impact Canada. (2018). *RIC Network strategic operational plan 2017-2020*. Ottawa, ON: Canada.

Sá, C., Li, S.X., & Faubert, B. (2011). Faculties of education and institutional strategies for knowledge mobilization: An exploratory study. *Higher Education*, *61*, 501–512. doi:10.1007/s10734-010-9344-4

Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Smit, J.P., & Hessels, L.K. (2021). The production of scientific and societal value in research evaluation: A review of societal impact assessment methods. *Research Evaluation*, 1–13. doi:10.1093/reseval/rvab002

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J.M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thomas, D.R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *27*, 237–246. doi:10.1177/1098214005283748

Veletanlić, E., & Sá, C. (2019). Government programs for university-industry partnerships: Logics, design, and implications for academic science. *Research Evaluation, 28*(2), 109–122. doi:10.1093/reseval/rvy034

Ward, V. (2017). Why, whose, what and how? A framework for knowledge mobilisers. *Evidence & Policy, 13*(3), 477–497. doi:10.1332/174426416X14634763278725

Ward, V., House, A., & Hamer, S. (2009). Knowledge brokering: The missing link in the evidence to action chain? *Evidence and Policy, 5*(3), 267–279. doi:10.1332/174426409X463811

Ward, V., Smith, S., House, A., & Hamer, S. (2012). Exploring knowledge exchange: A useful framework for practice and policy. *Social Science & Medicine*, *74*(3), 297–304. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.09.021

Ward, V., Smith, S., Keen, J., West, R., & House, A. (2018). Creating and implementing local health and wellbeing policy: Networks, interactions and collective knowledge creation amongst public sector managers. *Evidence & Policy*, *14*(3), 477–498. doi:10.1332/174426418X15314036922151

Watermeyer, R., & Rowe, G. (2021). Public engagement professionals in a prestige economy: Ghosts in the machine. *Studies in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/03075079.2021.1888078

Williams, K., & Grant, J. (2018). A comparative review of how the policy and procedures to assess research impact evolved in Australia and the UK. *Research Evaluation*, *27*(2), 93–105. doi:10.1093/reseval/rvx042

Wilsdon, J., Allen, L., Belfiore, E., Campbell, P., Curry, S., et al. (2015). *The metric tide: Report of the independent review of the role of metrics in research assessment and management*. doi:10.13140/RG.2.1.4929.1363

Wróblewska, M.N. (2021). Research impact evaluation and academic discourse. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 8*. doi:10.1057/s41599-021-00727-8

Wye, L., Cramer, H., Carey, J., Anthwal, R., Farr, M., & West, C. (2019). Knowledge brokers or relationship brokers? The role of an embedded knowledge mobilisation team. *Evidence & Policy, 15*(2), 277–292. doi:10.1332/174426417X15123845516148