

What do we know about using boundary objects in (integrated) knowledge translation?

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What are we doing?

Research into boundary objects pre-dates work on Engaged Scholarship (Van de Ven & Johnson 2006) and Integrated Knowledge Translation (Graham et al. 2018), but there is no map and the fields rarely cross paths. Our systematic scoping review investigated the use of boundary objects in health, social care, and public health.

A boundary object (Star & Griesemer 1989) is something that enables different people to work together. Typically it will be adaptable and 'weakly-structured' in joint use (but 'strongly-structured' when used by individuals)

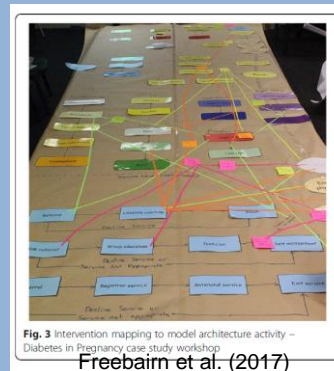


Fig. 3 Intervention mapping to model architecture activity – Diabetes in Pregnancy case study workshop
Freebairn et al. (2017)



Papoutsis et al. (2018)

How can our scoping review inform KT research and practice?

- Boundary objects themselves don't do the work; their function is enabled by context and facilitation
- It's a process not an event - constructive disagreement rather than consensus may still be a success
- Distinguish between functionalist and emancipatory perspectives
- Ignore issues of politics and power in knowledge use at your peril!
- Don't under-estimate how important symbolic aspects of boundary objects can be
- Don't get carried away with the concept in isolation - consider in relation to broader theory and actors

Boundary objects enable knowledge use by (Carlile 2002):

- Establishing a shared language
- Providing a means to communicate questions
- Empowering people to transform their knowledge

So what?

Programmes of Integrated Knowledge Translation have the potential to evaluate theory-informed IKT strategies that operationalise boundary object concepts

