

SUPPORTING AND ENABLING RESEARCH USE

The Quality Use of Research Evidence (QURE) Framework identifies three organisational enablers for supporting and enabling research use in schools; **leadership**, **culture**, and **infrastructure**.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY ABOUT SUPPORTING AND ENABLING RESEARCH USE?

Leadership is well-established as an important enabler for the use of research in schools. School leaders play a central role in providing access to research (Coldwell et al., 2017) and creating trusting environments where educators are empowered to engage with research (Sharples et al., 2019). Yet, they also have powerful influence to set an agenda for research use and support this across their school by modelling research engagement in their own outlooks and actions (Brown & Zhang, 2017).

At the same time, in order for research use to become a **cultural norm**, it must be embedded within the “outlook, systems and activity” of the school or organisation (Handscomb & MacBeath, 2003, p. 10). This includes promoting research use within whole-school policies and strategic planning documents (Dimmock, 2019) as well as creating opportunities for educators to engage with research in their day-to-day activities (Godfrey, 2019). These efforts not only foster an ethos of continuous improvement, but enable and support educators to use research as part of this ethos (Coldwell et al., 2017).

Intersecting both of these approaches is the need for the investment of **resources and infrastructure** to enable and support educators’ sustained use of research (Brown & Greany, 2018). Educators must have the means to access appropriate research as well as the time and space to thoughtfully engage with it (Stoll et al., 2018). It is also important that educators are provided with targeted professional development (Dyssegaard et al., 2017) and collaborative learning opportunities to support them to use research well (Nelson & Campbell, 2019). While this infrastructure may be made available internally within a school, external partners can also play a role (Farley-Ripple et al., 2018).

WHAT DO AUSTRALIAN EDUCATORS SAY ABOUT SUPPORTING AND ENABLING RESEARCH USE?

In our work, Australian educators were clear that school leaders play a crucial role in enabling and supporting their quality use of research. For example, in 89% of our interviews, educators highlighted how they expected their leaders to support research use in several ways, including:

- ◆ Facilitating educators’ understanding of research (referenced in 67% of interviews);
- ◆ Providing infrastructure and resources (67%);
- ◆ Promoting a clear vision for research use (41%); and
- ◆ Overseeing the implementation of a research-informed change (41%).

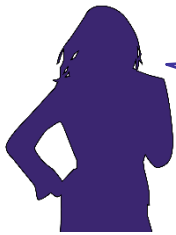
Common to each of these actions are leaders playing an active role in the quality use of research. For instance, when describing what effective leadership for quality research use entails, one teacher noted:

“Leaders are able to not only ‘quote’ the relevant research, but are able to match it with what is happening in the school and then model the application of that research to all teachers, staff and students.”



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Educators also described how whole-school cultures that prioritise the use of research are an important enabler for the quality use of research in the classroom. They often described this as a “collective mindset” that enabled their thoughtful use of research. For example, one senior leader reflected on the outcomes of establishing a research use culture in their own school:



“It’s really quite extraordinary. ... Everybody [is] talking the same language, moving the same way, and there’s this incredible momentum. People are invested, because they put in an incredible amount of work, but we’re really starting to get this whole team approach to what we’re doing.”

To achieve such cultures, educators described that research had to be “embedded” in their “every-day way of doing things”. In our latest survey of 414 educators, 66.4% identified that it was important to build research into daily activities, including: scheduled professional development (selected by 56.3%), whole staff planning days (51.7%), and individual staff development planning (44.2%).

However, even with supportive leadership and powerful research use cultures, many Australian educators’ use of research is hindered by a lack of infrastructure and resources (see Figure 1).

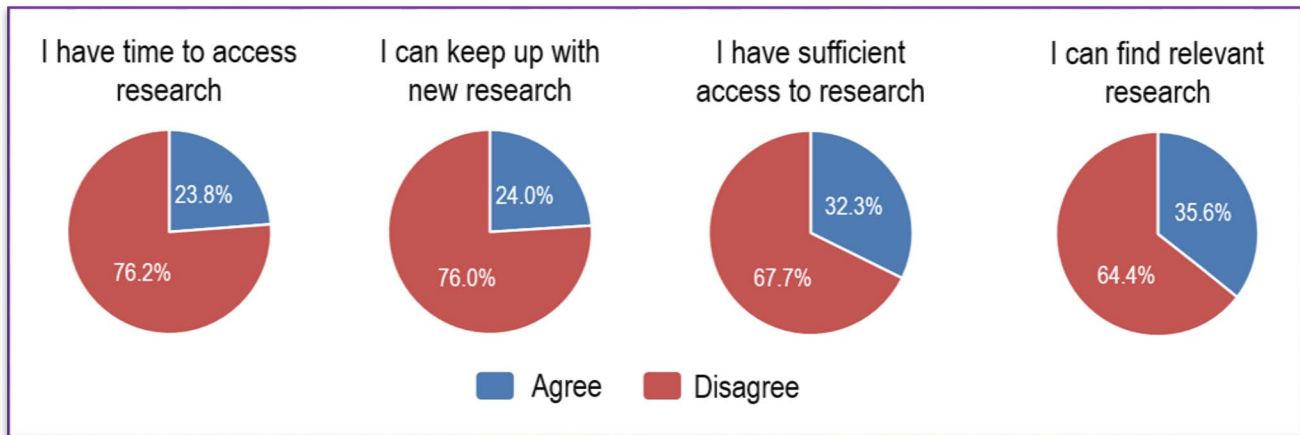


Figure 1: Educators’ perceptions of the barriers to their research use

They were resolute that their quality use of research had to be supported by the investment of resources and infrastructure - both internally to the school and from external educational stakeholders. For example, in our latest survey of 414 educators, educators identified five key priorities for which infrastructure is most crucial for their improved use of research (see Figure 2).

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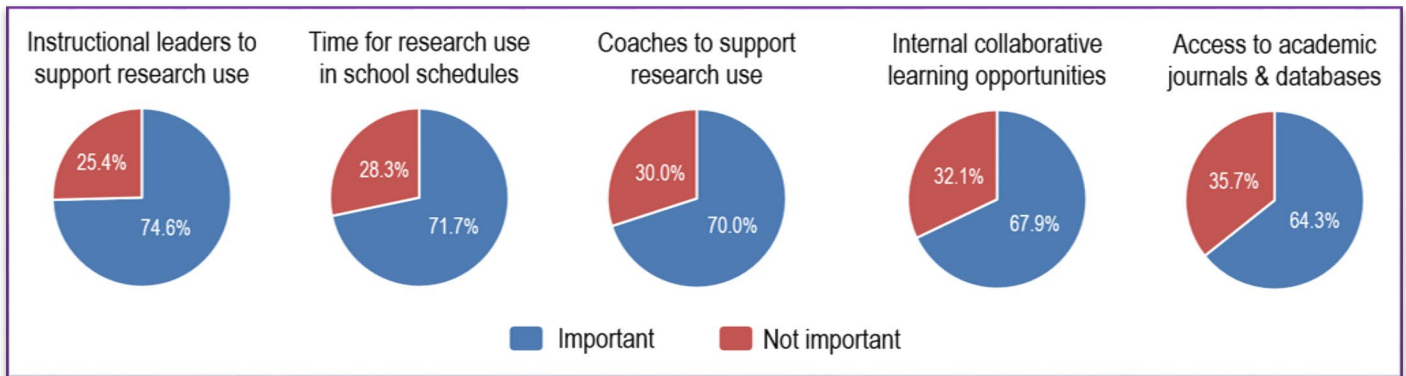


Figure 2: Educators' key infrastructure needs

This research summary was generated by the Monash Q Project. For further information, please refer to the Monash Q Project's website.



[Q Project Website](#)

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