



SUMMARY: An Arts-Based Knowledge Translation Framework for Researchers

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OBJECTIVES

We developed the Arts-based Knowledge Translation (ABKT) planning framework to help researchers who are interested in trying alternative approaches to KT. We created the ABKT framework for three reasons:

- Researchers are struggling with how to go about planning KT efforts with non-academic audiences
- The planning framework exposes researchers to the range of arts mechanisms that might be employed to communicate their research more broadly
- Because using the arts to communicate research has the potential to increase its accessibility across diverse groups, languages, and cultures

KEY DEFINITIONS

We distinguish arts-based KT from arts-based research, and define ABKT as a process that uses diverse art genres (visual arts, performing arts, creative writing, multi-media including video and photography) to communicate research with the goal of catalyzing dialogue, awareness, engagement, and advocacy to provide a foundation for social change on important societal issues (homelessness, medical diseases and conditions, sexual orientation, historical learning, among others).

FOUR-STAGE ARTS-BASED KT FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHERS

1. Identify Goals & Audiences	What are the goals of your ABKT efforts tailored for each target audience you hope to influence?	GOALS
2. Choose Art Genre & Medium	What art genre and medium is appropriate for your topic, goal and target audience?	ART
3. Build Partnerships	Who might be interested in partnering with you from communities including artists?	PARTNERS
4. Trace Dissemination & Impact	What methods and impact indicators might inform your ABKT efforts in relation to your goals?	IMPACT



STEP 1: IDENTIFY BROKERING GOAL OF ARTS-BASED KT

Key question: What are the goals of your ABKT efforts tailored for each target audience you hope to influence?

ABKT Brokering Goal	Description
Awareness	Increasing awareness of the empirical evidence on a topic or historical developments on a particular topic. Public awareness of issues is a critical step to galvanizing change.
Debate and Dialogue	ABKT can be used to create spaces for democratic debate and discussion of pressing societal issues.
Accessibility	Increasing accessibility to research through the arts. There are many areas (such as HIV education within international development) in which language, literacy, or culture are barriers to reading research materials. An arts-based approach to KT can address accessibility issues in some cases.
Engagement	Increasing engagement with research content through making it appeal to more of our senses and tapping into social-emotional aspects of the human condition. (i.e., empathetic participation)
Capacity-building and implementation support	ABKT efforts can be a catalyst to facilitate professional learning and skill development around a particular topic (for example mental health and medical conditions among many others).
Advocacy and Policy Influence	ABKT can be used for advocacy on a particular issue (domestic violence, homelessness, cancer) using research to stimulate policy priorities or change
Partnership and Co-production	Facilitating connections among diverse stakeholders, supporting collaboration, and co-producing diverse stakeholders views in order to convey plurality of perspectives on a topic.

STEP 2: CHOOSE ART GENRE

Key question: What art genre and medium are appropriate for your topic, goal, and target audience?

Art Form	Medium (Examples)	Dissemination Strategies	Impact Data
Visual Art	Illustrated books, comics Hopkins et al. 2012 (Canada); Gerdner 2008 (USA); Govender & Reddy 2011 (South Africa)	-Hard copy distribution -Public readings	In person discussion
	Quilting Atkinson et al. 2013 (Canada)	-Distributing photographs of the process and product -Showing the quilt to stakeholders and practitioners	In-person communication
Performing Arts	Music Dell 2011 (Canada)	-Music video (shared through social media, hard copy distribution) -Public hearings/ viewings (conferences, fundraisers)	-online communication (comment boards, e-mails) -in-person communication
	Dance Bagley & Cancienne 2001 (UK/USA); Boydell 2011 (Canada)	Live performances	-group discussion post-performance; in-theatre observation; written responses
	Drama Colantonio et al. 2008 (Canada); Gray et al. 2000 (Canada); Jonas-Simpson et al. 2012 (Canada); Norris 2000 (Canada); Schneider et al. 2014 (UK)	Live performances	-Audience questionnaires (likert scales, open-ended questions)
Creative Writing	Poetry Bruce et al. 2013 (Canada); Lapum et al. 2011 (Canada)	-Public exhibit of poems with accompanying imagery and artefacts -Links to online images/videos of the exhibit	-Comment guest book
	Short story/ story booklet Christensen 2012 (Canada); Hartling et al. 2010 (Canada)	-Hard copy distribution -Public/group readings -Conferences -Academic and online journals	-in-person discussion following public readings; online communication; focus groups
Multi-Media	Mixed media Cole & McIntyre 2004 (Canada); Parsons, Heus, & Moravac 2013 (Canada)	-Public exhibits and installations	-comment guest book/ written responses; in-depth interviews (audience, other stakeholders)
	Video Chaput 2015 (Canada); Hampton et al. 2011 (Canada)	-Public screenings -Hardcopy distribution	-in-person discussion following public screenings; questionnaires

STEP 3: BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

Key question: Who might be interested in partnering with you from communities including artists?

We argue that to do ABKT justice, researchers should consult and engage artists who have expertise in the chosen art genre and medium in the ABKT process. Just as researchers have expertise in their area, so too do artists and art brokers (such as curators) who work professionally within the arts. Throughout the process of creation, it may be helpful to engage outside artists, professionals, and community members to guide critical discussion about the work to further guide the direction and quality of the piece(s).

STEP 4: TRACE AND MEASURE IMPACT

Key question: What methods and impact indicators might inform your ABKT efforts in relation to your goals?

Impact Category	Indicators (Predominantly from Barwick 2011)
Reach Indicators: measure how many people a particular ABKT project, performance, or product has reached.	# resources distributed, # requested, Google Analytics data (# visitors, # downloads etc), tracking data from social media
Partnership and Collaboration Indicators: measure processes of co-production and dissemination of ABKT with different partners and/or target audiences	# products/performances developed or disseminated with partners, # and type of capacity building efforts, network growth, clear communication, engagement of different stakeholders
Usefulness Indicators: measure whether a target audience found the ABKT products, performances, and so on useful	read, satisfied with, usefulness of, gained knowledge, changed view, # intend to use, # adapt information
Practice, Program or Service Change Indicators: measures commitment to change, process measures and outcome measures where possible	# commitment to change, observed change, reported change, documentation, feedback, process measures
Policy and Advocacy Indicators: measures influence and change in policy debate, formation, and implementation	documentation, feedback, process measures, citations, involvement in policy process, media/social media coverage

REFERENCES

For a full list of references supporting the ABKT framework, please see our full article.



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ABOUT RIPPLE: Dr. Amanda Cooper, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University, is the Principal Investigator of RIPPLE. RIPPLE (Research

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