Communicating Research to Policy-makers

Cambio de Colores

April 1, 2005

David C. Valentine

Suggested Citation:
Overview

• Communication errors
• A tale of two cultures
• Attributes of the policy arena
• Improving communication
• Conclusion
Common Communication Errors

- My issues - not yours
- Reactive
- Episodic
- Advocacy over information
- Limited to friends and allies
- Premature closure re solutions
Two Cultures

• Academic culture
  - Contemplative
  - Soft timelines
  - Iterative and face to face
  - Conclusion adverse

• Policy culture
  - Action oriented
  - Hard timelines
  - Bottom line
    • What you know, not how you know it
    • Research-based conclusions

Missouri Legislative Academy
Attributes of the Policy Arena

• **Policy funnel**
  - Policy cycle
  - When information is most/least valuable

• **Inverted classroom**
  - Audience is in control

• **Not aware of consequences of decisions**
  - Opportunity to educate
Improving Communication

- Focus on local legislators and members of important committees
- Develop working relationship/establish credentials
- Provide information first
- Respond to their issues/inquiries
- Remember staff
Effective Modes of Communication

- In person
- As a witness
- Written communication
• Write to audience
• Overview issue
  - Not nuances
  - Is NOT dumbing down!
  - Draw conclusions
  - Recommendations?
Communicating Research To Policymakers

- Remember the culture
- Context of decision-making
- Educate, educate
- Persistence!
- Questions??

Missouri Legislative Academy