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**Evidence Use in the Sex Education Debates:
The Interacting Roles of Values, Beliefs, and Collateral Information**
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Research Questions ...

- How do policy influentials appraise and use evidence related to the effectiveness of school-based sexuality education?
- How do social values, ideology, prior beliefs, and collateral information impact and interact with evidence appraisal and use?
- What is the potential of using deliberative inquiry methods to help disentangle value and evidence components of arguments?

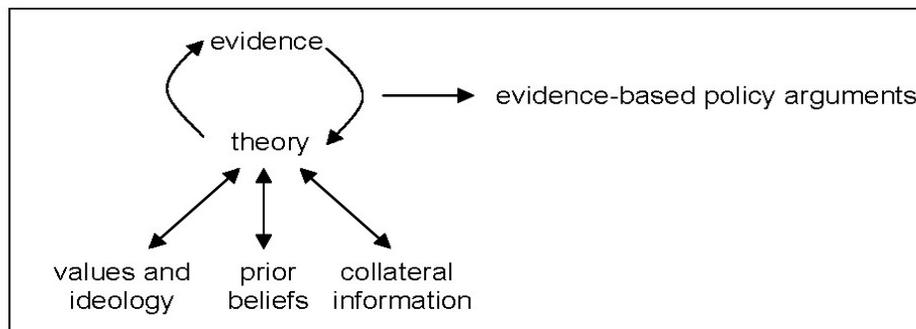
Background ...

- Experimental studies in cognitive psychology have demonstrated the inter-dependent roles of theory and evidence, together with prior beliefs and collateral information, in causal and scientific reasoning among experts and non-experts alike.
- Sociological analyses of research utilization in policy making have repeatedly documented the social and motivational aspects of research use, and the inter-dependent relationship between evidence and ideology.
- The cognitive, social, and motivational factors that influence evidence appraisal and use are likely to play especially important roles in hot-button policy areas such as school-based sex education

Methods ...

- A rigorous multiple-case-study design to test and refine a hypothesized theoretical model of evidence appraisal and use by policy makers, administrators, advocates, and journalists.
- Archival documents analysis, individual interviews, and focus groups
- Ten cases comprising sex education policy debates about national, California, and Minnesota legislation, local school district policy, and research report interpretation.

Hypothesized Theoretical Model ...



Partners and Advisors ...

- Michael D. Resnick (University of Minnesota)
- Carol H. Weiss (Harvard University)
- Barbara Koslowski (Cornell University)
- Lori Dorfman (Berkeley Media Studies Group)

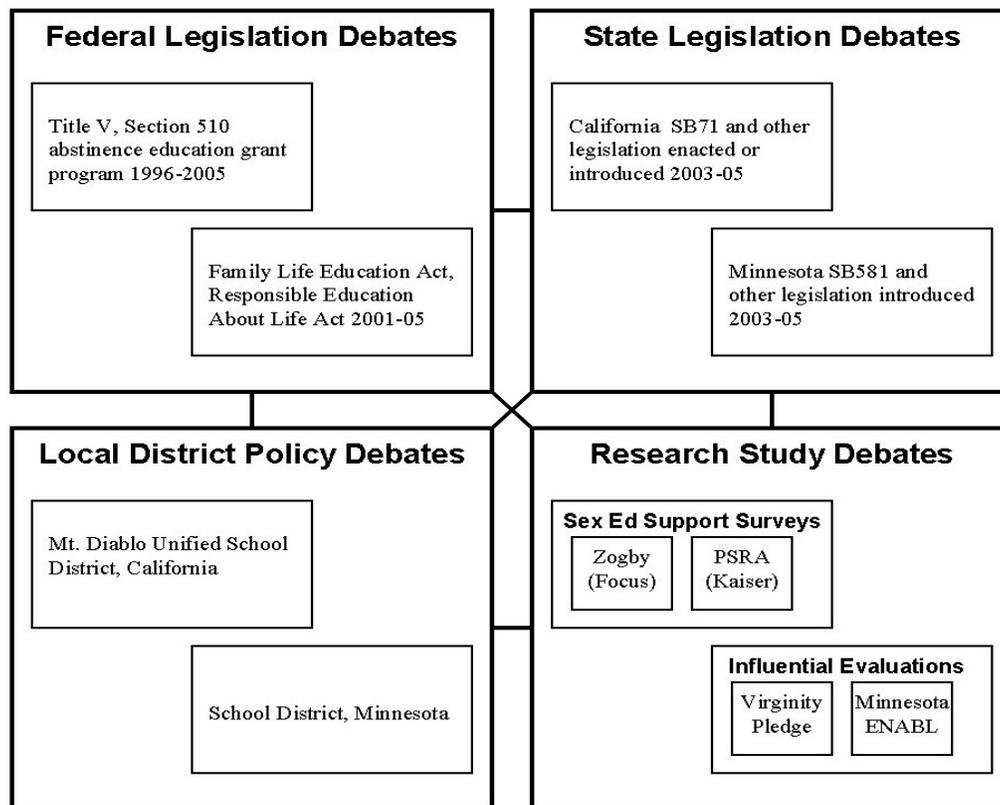


Figure 2. Multiple embedded case design (large square boxes represent primary cases, rectangular boxes represent level 2 embedded cases, small square boxes represent level 3 embedded sub-units).

Selected References ...

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