

Implementing Systems Thinking in Early Childhood: The How's of Collaboration

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Preamble: The Questions

- *Part I: Panacea or Problem?*
- *Part II: Why NOW?*
- *Part III: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?*
- *Part IV: What Is It, Really?*
- *Part V: Collaboration Myths and Realities*
- *Part VI: Moving Forward*

Part I

Collaboration:

Panacea or Problem?

Collaboration: Panacea or Problem?

- *MYTH 1: Collaboration is THE Panacea...*
 - Can do everything
 - Can fix everything
 - It is the answer to everything that is (or ever was) wrong!!!
 - Communication: given as the reason nothing works

Collaboration: Panacea or Problem?

- ***MYTH 2: Collaboration is THE Problem...***
 - Like miscommunication, non-collaboration is the reason **NOTHING** works
 - Seen as a time and relationship parasite
 - Regarded as **END**, not **MEANS**

Collaboration: Panacea or Problem?

- *However we hold collaboration, two things are clear*
 - 1. It is a hot topic.
 - 2. It is hard to wrap our arms around

Part II

Collaboration:

Why NOW?

Why Collaboration NOW?: Children and Their Programs

- *Increasing concerns with excellence and equity for all children, beginning in the early years*
- *Increasing expectations being placed on early childhood education as the rationale for investment*
- *Quiet secret that normative services for young children are not achieving the accomplishments of the “model” programs*

Why Collaboration NOW?: Children and Their Programs

- *On the surface, all seems great...BUT*
- *Underneath it all, nothing is working the way we want it to:*
 - Too little quality
 - Too many programs
 - Head Start Child Care Partnerships
 - New Pre-K Funds
 - IDEA
 - Too little effort to meet children's individual needs
 - Harder we try, less effective programs/services seem to be

Why Collaboration NOW?: The Social Context

- *Inadequacies of existing bureaucracies*
 - Inflexibility in the face of change and uncertainty
 - Hierarchical structures don't work in knowledge-driven, team settings
 - Market-driven competition not necessarily the key for social services

Why Collaboration NOW?: The Social Context

- *New demands of post-industrial world*
 - More technically sophisticated
 - More rapid change
 - Greater specialization
 - Greater accountability and press for outcomes

Why Collaboration NOW?: The Social Context

- *Leads To A Press for Collaboration:*
 - Among Agencies
 - Among Institutions
 - Among Policies
 - Among People
 - Among Practices

Part III

Collaboration:

*An Idea Whose Time
Has Come?*

*Collaboration:
An Idea Whose Time Has Come?*



The Cat with Nine Lives:

Life 1 – Being Born

- ***Colonial Period (1600s – mid-1700s)***
 - Poor Law of 1601: towns and parishes provided relief when informal supports (e.g., families and friends) were unavailable or unable to respond
- ***The New Republic (1776 – mid-1800s)***
 - Federalist duality led to continual debate regarding which level of government should be responsible for the poor and what kind of support it should offer
- ***Civil War and Reconstruction (1861 – early 1900s)***
 - Shift in ideology led to increased sympathy and support for human services and led to the creation of several private aid charities, mutual aid societies, and settlement houses
 - Charity Organization Societies: established in 1877 to bring order to the overlapping and uncoordinated set of charities

The Cat with Nine Lives:

Life 2 – Early Years

- **1930s – 1950s**

- Era marked by rapid expansion of social services, notably the Social Security Act of 1935, which authorized support for:
 - Dependent children
 - The aged
 - The blind
 - Maternal and child health services
 - Child welfare services
 - Vocational rehabilitation
 - Public health services
- 1953: Federal Security Agency became Department of Health, Education, & Welfare (HEW)

The Cat with Nine Lives:

Life 3 – Preschool

- **1960s – 1970s**

- Number of federal categorical grant programs more than doubled between 1962 and 1966, but the focus was on substance, not structure

- No organizational philosophy or coordination of efforts—no master plan

- Chaos led to creation of Community Action Agencies: non-governmental agencies charged with fostering local-level coordination of services

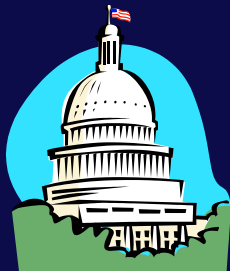
- The New Federalism

- President Nixon encouraged SI through simplification of federal grant processes and program decentralization

*The Cat with Nine Lives:
Life 4 – Elementary School*

- *1970s – 1990s*

- Waxing and waning of federal initiatives
- President Reagan emphasized devolution of authority to the states and wanted to reduce human services expenditures
- Block grants became the norm—ostensibly to foster SI, but actually created even more chaos



The Cat with Nine Lives: *Life 5 – Allied Services Acts* *1972, 1974, and 1975*

- *Allied Services Act of 1972*

- Attempted to:

- Strengthen human resources management and planning operations at the state and local levels (capacity building)
- Integrate human services delivery to meet clients' multiple problems (institutional reform)

- Would have allowed governors to designate a state agency to develop a statewide plan to:

- Create statewide service areas
- Select local areas to participate in the plan and to designate a local agency to develop the plan
- Approve local service plans and their incorporation into a statewide plan



The Cat with Nine Lives: Life 5 – Allied Services Acts 1972, 1974, and 1975

- *Allied Services Act of 1972 (continued)*

- Raised concerns

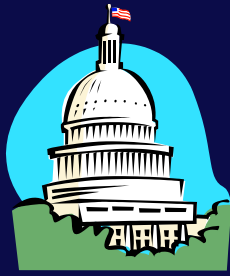
- Fear that plan concealed serious intentions to cut federal spending for human services programs
- Questions about the planning process; who should have authority and capacity to integrate functions?
- Lack of emphasis on professional preparation
- Neglectful of the relationship between the private and public sectors
- Not enough money allocated
- Questions related to regulatory flexibility

- ASA needed to be revamped



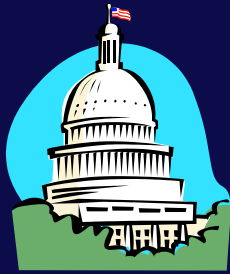
The Cat with Nine Lives: *Life 5 – Allied Services Acts* *1972, 1974, and 1975*

- *Allied Services Act of 1974 and 1975 (Round II)*
 - Three titles:
 - 1. Gives authority to Secretary of HEW to give demonstration grants to selected states for development of allied service delivery plans
 - 2. Allows 3-year implementation grants to assist in meeting initial cost of consolidating services
 - 3. Creates 5 special authorities to lend flexibility to make the ASA a valid demonstration of SI, including an evaluation component
 - Did not pass Congress; “died with a whimper”



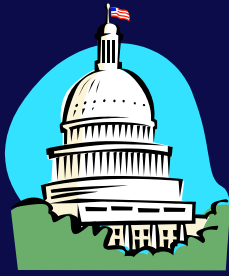
The Cat with Nine Lives: Life 6 – Omnibus Act

- ***Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981***
 - Established 9 new or revised block grants
 - Reduced funding for the consolidated programs by 25%
 - Strengthened role of state at expense of local nonprofit agencies, school districts, and small municipalities



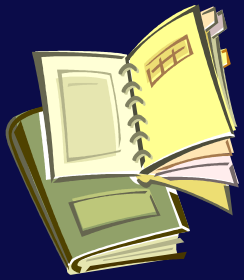
The Cat with Nine Lives: Life 7 – IDEA

- ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Act***
 - Part C: Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (1986)
 - Assists states in operating a comprehensive, statewide program of early intervention services for children up to age 3
 - States have much discretion in developing their service coordination system
 - Section 619: Preschool Grants Program (1991)
 - Authorizes state grants to serve children with disabilities ages 3-5 (and in some cases, younger children) if the state qualifies for the Part B grants-to-states program
 - Currently, all states qualify for and receive IDEA preschool grants



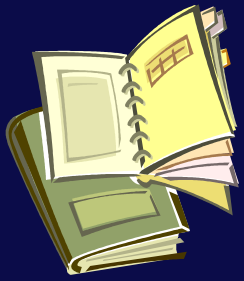
The Cat with Nine Lives: *Life 8 – ECE*

- *Early Childhood Legislation*
 - Head Start Collaboration Grants
 - CCDF set aside allowing funds to be used for coordination
 - Early Learning Challenge Fund
 - HS-CC Partnership Grants
 - Emergence of State Offices and Coordinating Mechanisms
 - MA, PA, GA, MD, CT



The Cat with Nine Lives: Life 9 – Research and Demonstration

- ***HEW Task Forces (1971)***
 - Task Force on Service Integration Barriers and Constraints; tried to meet “head-on the problems created within HEW’s vast network of programs”
- ***Service Integration Target of Opportunity (SITO) Projects (1972)***
 - Created as a result of realization that concrete strategies were needed
 - Objective: provide the broadest possible base for demonstration of various SI techniques and provide an information base for legislation



The Cat with Nine Lives: Life 9 – Research and Demonstration

- ***Partnership Grants Program (PGP) (1974)***
 - Designed to help chief executives and local general purpose governments improve their capacity to plan and manage human services programs
 - Difficult to evaluate due to the large variety of objectives and growing SI efforts beyond the PGP
- ***Service Integration Pilot Projects (1984)***
 - Outcome-oriented with a focus on effective management
 - Sense of system and individual accountability

The Cat with Nine Lives: Summary

- *Era of ardent attempts to draft legislation to address the problems caused by growing social services industry*
- *Need to acknowledge and understand why these efforts failed*
- *May have failed for the very same reasons that we face today:*
 - Unresolved federalist issues
 - Concerns about power diminution
 - Lack of political and field support
 - Always associated with block grants and efforts to reduce funds (SI as the fig leaf for spending cuts)

The Cat with Nine Lives: Summary

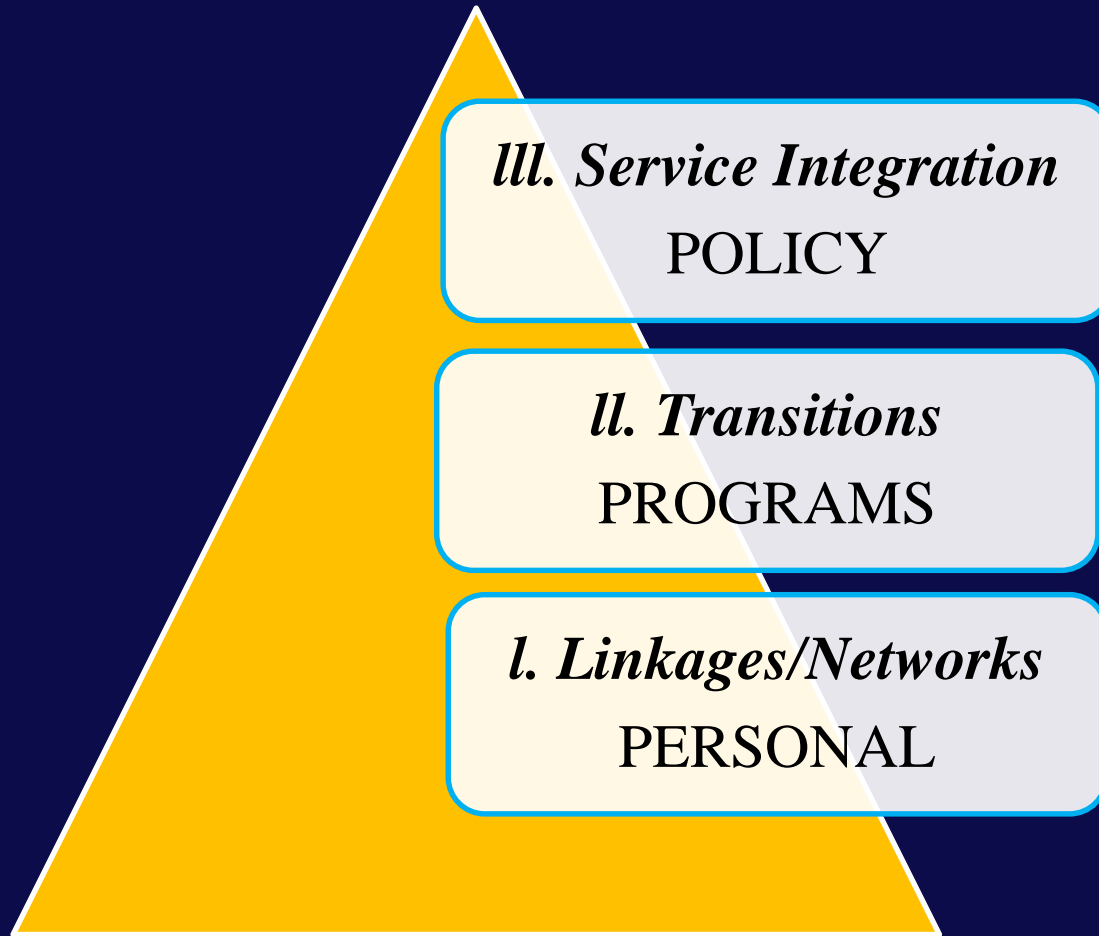
- *This cat has a loooooooooooooooooooooooooooooong history that is characterized by:*
 - Clear recognition of the need for and lack of individual, programmatic, and policy collaboration
 - Multiple efforts and strategies to redress the problems
 - Clear energy and commitment to try to resolve the issues
- *Question is: What is Life 10?*
 - To answer, we need to define it more precisely

Part IV

Collaboration:

What is It, Really?

Why Collaboration NOW?: The Social Context



The Many Faces of Collaboration

- *Levels do not function independently*
- *Each is linked with the others, with the policy influencing the programs, and, professionally, the programs influencing the personal*
- *Can't address collaboration without looking at all three*
- *One of the problems is that we look at the personal and maybe the programmatic tiers, but not at the policy tier*

The Many Faces of Collaboration

<i>Service Integration</i>	<i>POLICY</i>	<i>Collaboration</i>	<i>Goods, materials, accountabilities, responsibilities shared durably over time</i>
<i>Transitions</i>	<i>PROGRAMMATIC</i>	<i>Coordination</i>	<i>Events and materials/documents coordinated among disparate entities to promote continuity for children/families</i>
<i>Linkages/ Networking</i>	<i>PERSONAL</i>	<i>Cooperation</i>	<i>Non-institutional exchanges</i>

Tier I: Linkages/Networking

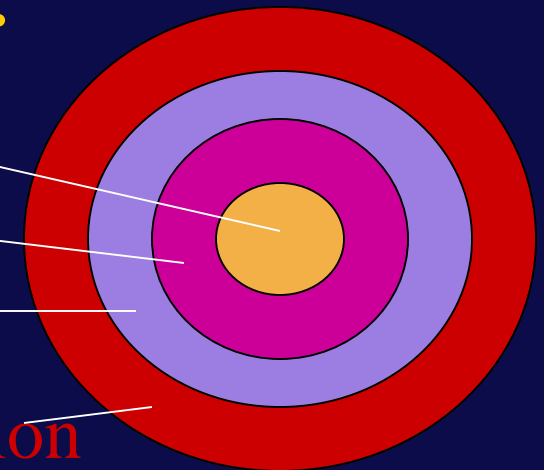
- *Social media*
- *Webinars*
- *Conferences*
- *Mentoring/Coaching*
- *ETC*

Tier II: Transitions

- *Continuity efforts*
- *P-3 Movement*
- *This Institute*
- *NGA/CCSSO supporting these efforts*
- *Document alignment work*
- *Kindergarten Entry Assessments*

Tier III: Service Integration

- *Service integration means many different things!!*
- *Easiest to understand using a framework based on the works of Agranoff & Pattakos (1979), which suggests four dimensions:*
 - Client-centered integration
 - Program-centered integration
 - Policy-centered integration
 - Organizationally-centered integration



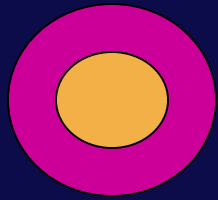
● *Client-centered Integration*

- *Regards clients as complex individuals with multiple needs*
- *Acknowledges that client problems generally intertwined*
- *Client needs transcend any single department*

● *Client-centered Strategies*

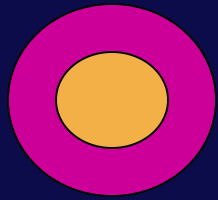
- *Case management: Approaches*

- Via the individual – a generalist takes full responsibility for providing core management services from intake to termination
- Via an interdisciplinary team – specialists work together to assess client needs and to plan a service strategy
- Sequential approach – responsibility for creating linkages shifts as client progresses through stages of service delivery (e.g., from diagnosis to referral)
- Coordination approach – responsibility divided according to needs of individual family members rather than by sequence
- IEP



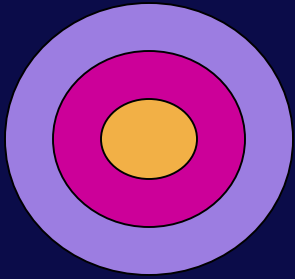
Program-centered Integration

- *Attempts to link discrete programs and services into a multifaceted delivery system*
- *Links autonomous agencies so that their activities can be blended in service to clients*
- *Does not typically change structure of the programs, but establishes linking mechanisms among diverse programs*



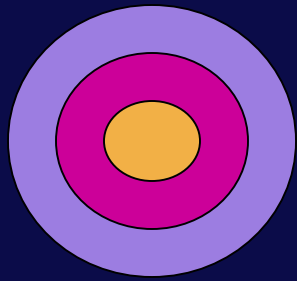
Program-centered Strategies

- *Colocation: coordinate programs by joining them physically in one all-purpose facility*
- *Integrated staffing: make collective decisions on staff management issues, including reassignment and sharing of staff across programs*
- *Joint planning and programming linkages*
- *Fiscal linkages: joint purchase of services; joint budgeting; joint funding*



Policy-centered Integration

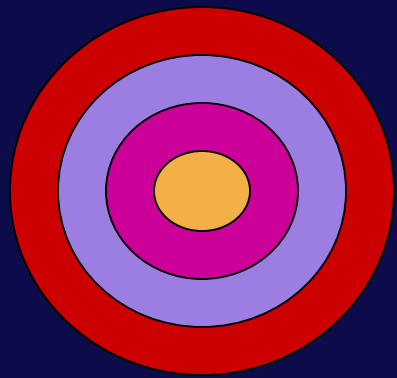
- *Sees that SI is too complex and too pervasive to be solved program by program*
- *Solution requires wider, multilevel perspective*
- *Policy is the best tool to instantiate a comprehensive, continuing course of action*



Policy-centered Strategies

Refinancing – share of services currently paid for by state and local dollars refinanced with federal resources

De-categorization – allows for greater discretion in use of funds at both policy and program/provider levels

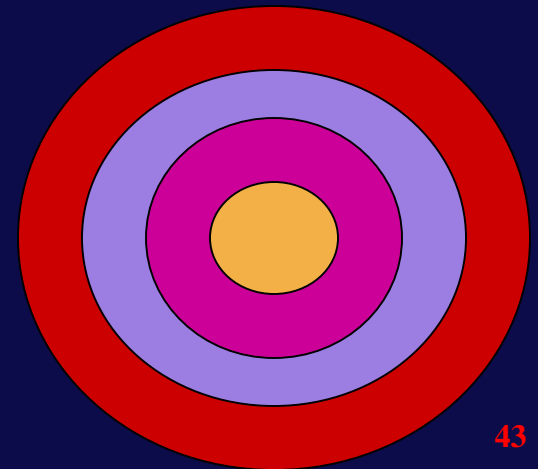


Organizationally-centered Integration

- *Understands the limitations of policy and usually accompanies it*
- *Involves the creation of a new organization or the consolidation of existing ones.*

Definition of Service Integration

- *Four distinct areas where service integration can be focused*
- *Each worthy and important*
- *Each adds to the complexity of comprehending and implementing service integration*



Part V

*Collaboration
Realities*

Collaboration Realities

1. Good systemic efforts underway, but often informal starts at the program level

- Many tend to be leader-dependent and fold when leaders leave or are transferred
- Most are under-resourced, so very hard to be successful
- More severely challenged because the human services sector and many families are in worse conditions

Collaboration Realities

2. Move toward scientifically rigorous research as a prerequisite for federal funding poses real challenges for collaboration:

- Difficult to invoke random assignment
- Difficult to find comparable control groups
- Difficult to measure success over the short term
- Inadequate instrumentation
- Difficult to discern the legitimate end of contemporary service integration

Collaboration Realities

3. Devolution of responsibility to states has led to a highly idiosyncratic approach to policy

- “Let 1,000 flowers bloom” – each state has developed a different collaborative approach



Collaboration Realities

- ***BOTTOM LINE:***

- It is doable, but it's tough

- Need to moderate expectations

Part VI

Collaboration: Moving Forward

MOVING FORWARD

- *TAKE STOCK*
 - History,
 - Context,
 - Tools
- *THINK WIDE; WORK NARROW*
- *PLAN WELL*

History, Context, and Tools

- *Not the first generation to recognize the need for importance of collaboration; Learn from the past*
- *Examine what has worked in your own context*
- *Acknowledge that we have better tools (media, technology) to make it easier and more efficient*

Think Wide: Work Narrow

- *Need a clear and big vision of what is to be accomplished*
 - Think systems, not programs
 - Think all children, not some children
 - Think quality and quantity
 - Think all developmental domains, not some
 - Think about linkages between pedagogical tools (standards, curriculum, IEPs, IFSPs, assessments) and actions

Think Wide: Work Narrow

- *Think wide about ECE and IDEA, not as separate worlds*
 - Conceptualize leadership/policy/advocacy together
 - IDEA has much to teach ECE about individualized educational planning, meeting individual needs, linkages with parents, attention to integration
 - ECE has much to teach IDEA about inventive governance, financing, standards
 - *Need more communication vehicles!!*

Think Wide: Work Narrow

- *Work Narrow*

- Divide and conquer
- ECE-CWD too huge to do it all
- Need to task analyze and task divide, with provision for frequent taking stock
- Bite off bits within the context of a larger vision



Plan Well

- *Vision the ideal*
- *Vision for policy, practice, and research*
- *Start when children are very young*
- *Plan for the long-term*
- *Build in regular review of the plan*

