

Collaboration in Early Care and Education:

Establishing a Framework for a Research Agenda

Measuring Collaboration: What the Public Management Literature Contributes

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Measuring Collaboration

- Measuring collaboration has been a challenging process in many different policy fields
- Collaborations are often treated like snowflakes
- Need to build theory, measures, and practice around what are the common characteristics of effective collaborations

Common Measurement Issues

- What is a collaboration (versus partnership, network, or other form of inter-organizational relationship)?
- Level of analysis at which the collaboration is being delivered or operated
- Measuring antecedents to collaboration
- Measuring collaborative design
- Measuring the process—what constitutes a quality process
- Measuring collaborative outcomes

What the Public Management Literature Offers

- Measuring capacity—
 - Management capacity
 - Administrative capacity
 - Collaborative capacity
- Measuring institutional effects—
 - Problem complexity-understanding of policy field and the need for collaboration in the field
 - Role of mandates in driving collaboration
 - Impediments of different problem definitions
- Measuring implementation processes—
 - The resources devoted to the collaboration
 - Inhibitors to the collaboration
- Primers-Bingham and O’Leary (2008) and O’Leary and Bingham (2009)

One Study Example

- Investigating Partnerships in Early Care and Education (I-PIECE)
- Pre-k, childcare, and Head Start partnership
- Multiple embedded case study design with mixed methods
- Measuring the impact of the collaboration on:
 - The organization as a whole
 - The classroom
 - The teacher in the class
 - Child outcomes
- How did we measure the collaboration?

Collaborations in ECE-I-PIECE Measures

- Motivations to collaborate—question that had organizations selecting and ranking reasons from a list of indicators
- Collaboration was mapped initially through an access protocol—what we learned through this study changed how we would have measured this
- Level of funding attached to the partners and level of interaction--would map this better quantitatively
- Collaboration in practice varied upon implementation and commitment of the partners (Sowa 2008):
 - Shallow Collaboration or collaborative contracting
 - Medium Collaboration or capacity-building collaborations
 - Deep Collaboration or community-building collaborations

Collaboration in ECE-I-PIECE Measures

- Teacher measures:
 - Satisfaction with pay and benefits
 - Turnover in the organization
 - Impact on professional development
- Classroom measures:
 - Impact on the diversity of services offered
 - Impact on curriculum
 - Impact on paperwork and administrative issues

Collaborative Outcomes

- Process outcomes-Thomson 2001
- Goal attainment—going to depend on the particular goal of the collaboration
- Systems change
- Improved relationships—trust measures, red tape measures (see Bozeman 2001)
- My work—Selden, Sowa, and Sandfort (2006)- Collaborative intensity impacts outcomes (parental perceptions of child readiness and classroom quality)
- Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006)—outcomes and accountabilities—opportunities to leverage this in early care and education