

Fit and Collaboration:

Crossing Disciplines to Create Innovative Outcomes

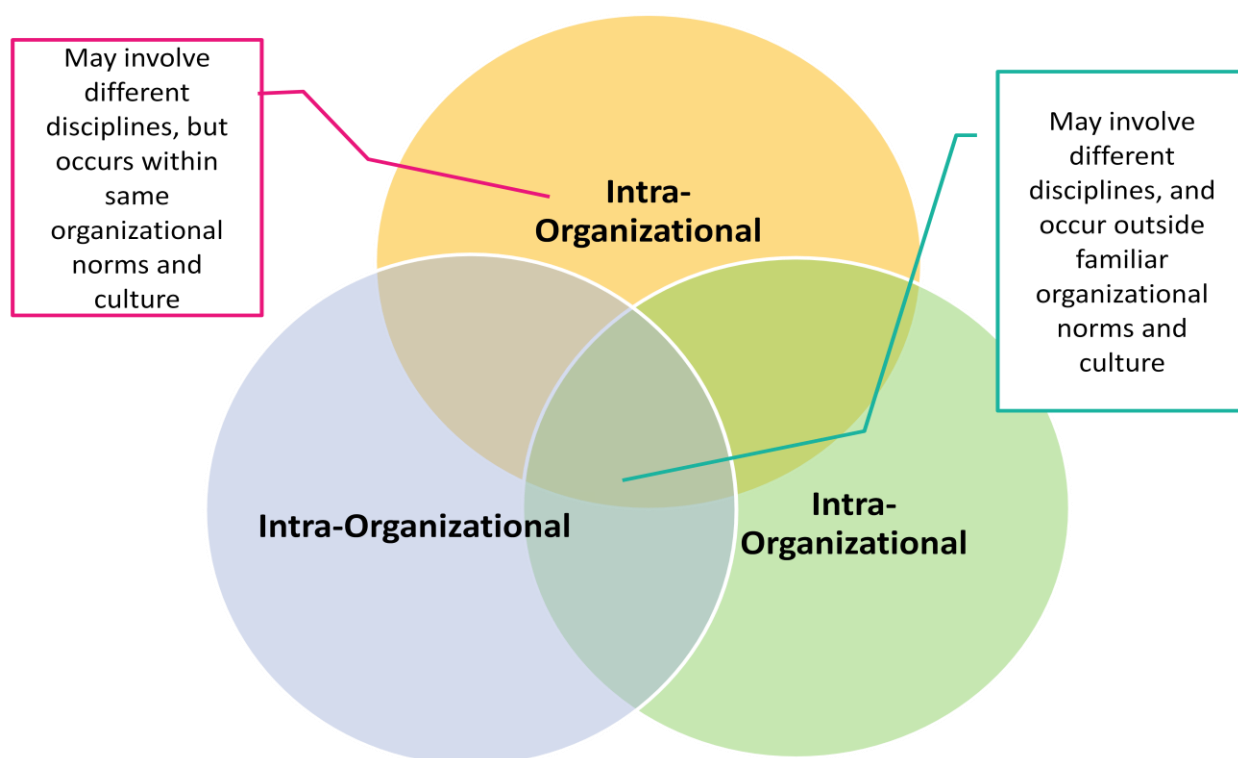
Models and Notes

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Collaboration: "an interactive process that engages two or more participants who work together to achieve outcomes they could not accomplish independently."

Collaboration can occur within or across organizations.



Looking Beyond a Single Discipline: Some Definitions

Multidisciplinary

- Relating to, or making use of several disciplines at once.

Cross-disciplinary

- Coordinated effort involving two or more disciplines.

Transdisciplinary

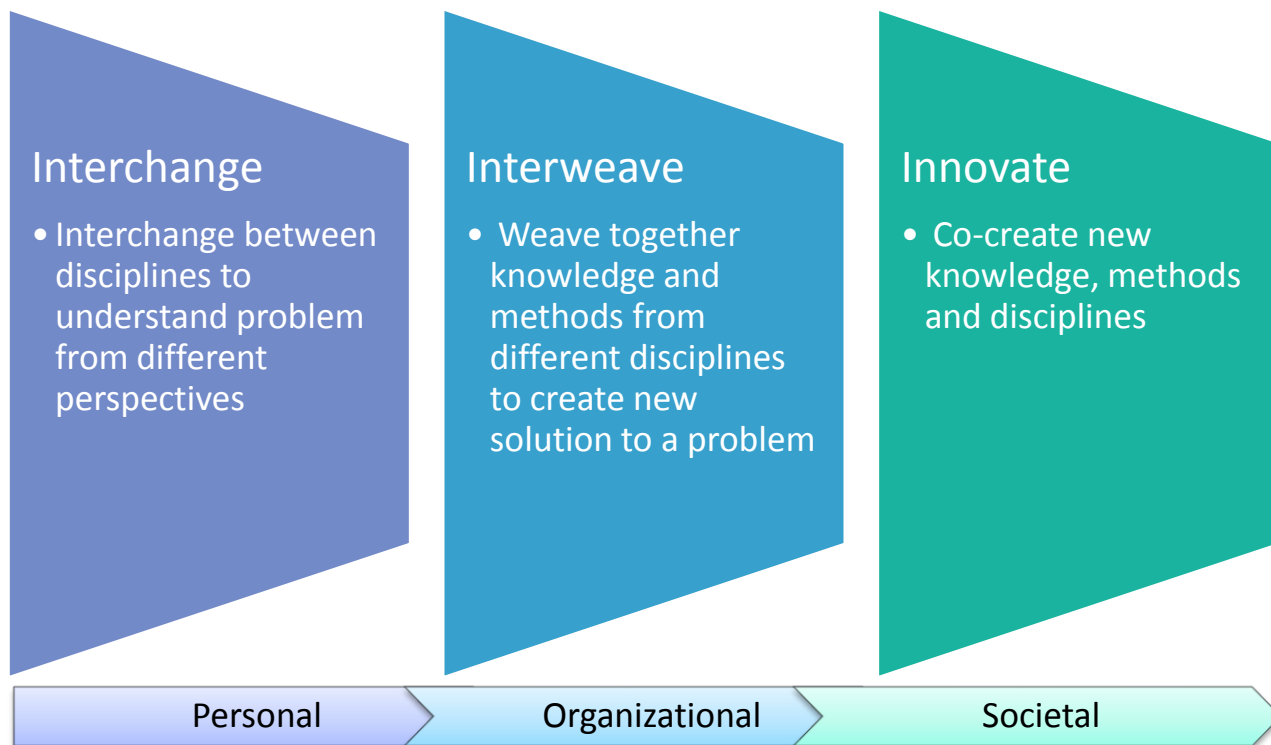
- Approaches that transcend boundaries of conventional disciplines.

Interdisciplinary

- Process of combining two or more disciplines, fields of study or professions

Taxonomy of Interdisciplinarity: Process, Integration and Outcomes

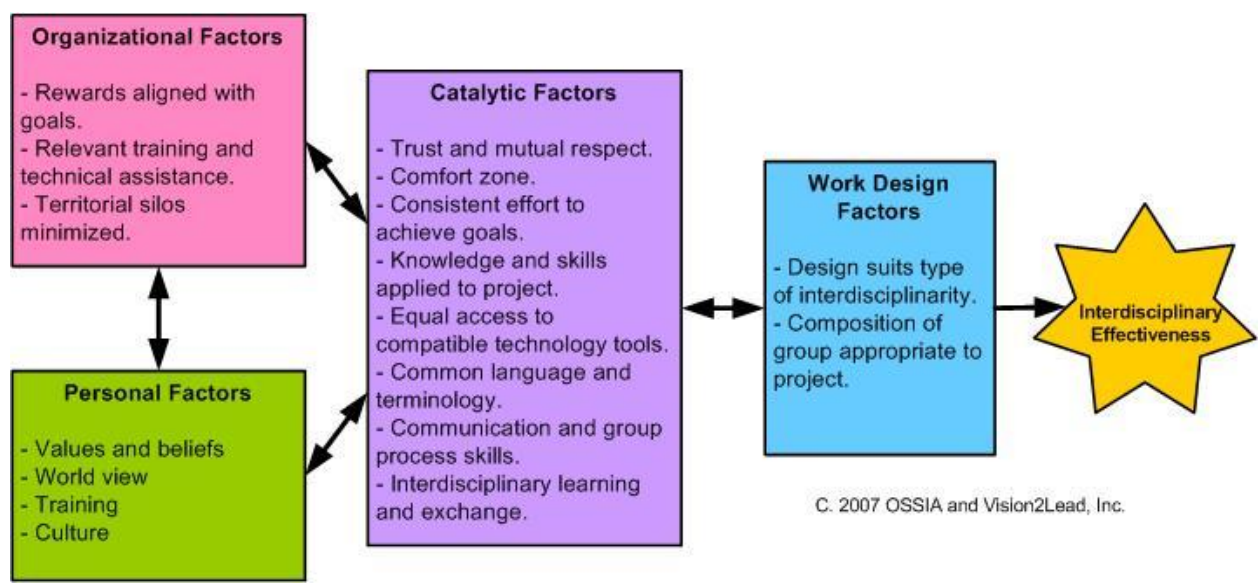
One reason it is hard to understand interdisciplinarity is that terminology is not common across writers and theorists. The most important distinctions relate to process, degree of integration, and outcomes.



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1. **Interchange:** This level involves interaction of disciplines, using different lenses to view a problem; each offers that discipline's knowledge and processes. Interchange often occurs at the personal level—building relationships.
2. **Interweave:** At this level the problem is solved by integrating parts of disciplines or elements to create a new solution to the problem. This could be described as “intellectual pluralism;” borrowing tools, methods, concepts, models or paradigms from other fields. Interweave may involve personal and organizational levels—typically more commitment and coordination are needed than could be accomplished by individuals.
3. **Innovate:** Co-creation of new knowledge, new approaches or disciplines. This level of new thinking typically involves organizational and societal—questions, frames of reference and people involved may change in an innovative interdisciplinary process.

What factors should be aligned to support optimal fit in collaborative projects?



When you face situation where people or organizations are coming together—what can you do to support innovation? What factors are at play, what factors allow things to move forward toward successful interdisciplinary work?