

Applying theoretical models into practice? Not that easy!

*Symposium presented at the 2015 SCRA Biennial Conference
on Community Research and Action,
Lowell, MA, June 25, 2015*

Overview

- Practitioners are agents of change
 - Nothing is as a practical as a good theory
 - If you want truly to understand something, try to change it!
- Kurt Lewin
 - How do practitioners build their models of practice?
 - How do they act with and through these models?

Overview

- Interest in how local actors learn, create, apply, and adapt program theory is reflected in
 - theory based evaluation
 - theory of change evaluations
 - culturally competent practice
- Implementation research conceives fidelity as
 - knowledge, attitudes, skills (KAS)
 - presence of key program elements
 - adherence to curriculum
- Less attention to how front-line staff appropriate, apply and create program theory

Overview

- Interventions are not simply dependent on techniques, skills and practices
 - Change agents as well as their clients are human beings in relation who are in the process of learning and developing
- Action for change influenced by
 - Actors' cognitive models
 - The physical, social and cultural context
 - Results of testing models in action
- Three examples of how conceptual frameworks are appropriated and applied by local actors

Overview

- Implementing Triple P: The role of practice models (Brunson, Daly, Gagné)
- Stakeholders in home visitor programs: How are intervention objectives applied and negotiated in disadvantaged circumstances (Saïas)
- Supporting community mobilization with the ecosystemic model: The case of Avenir d'enfants (Daly, Brunson)

Implementing Triple P: The role of practice models

Liesette Brunson,¹ Sonia Daly,¹ and Marie-Hélène Gagné²

Paper presented *at the 2015 SCRA Biennial Conference on Community Research and Action, Lowell, MA, June 25, 2015*

¹*Université du Québec à Montréal,* ²*Université Laval*

Chaire de partenariat
en prévention de la
maltraitance



Chaire de partenariat en prévention de la maltraitance

Marie-Hélène Gagné, PI, Université Laval

*Coinvestigators: Liesette Brunson, Marie-Éve Clément, Sylvie Drapeau,
Catherine M. Lee, Sylvie Normandeau, Tristan Milot, Robert Pauzé,
Geneviève Piché, Marie-Claude Richard*



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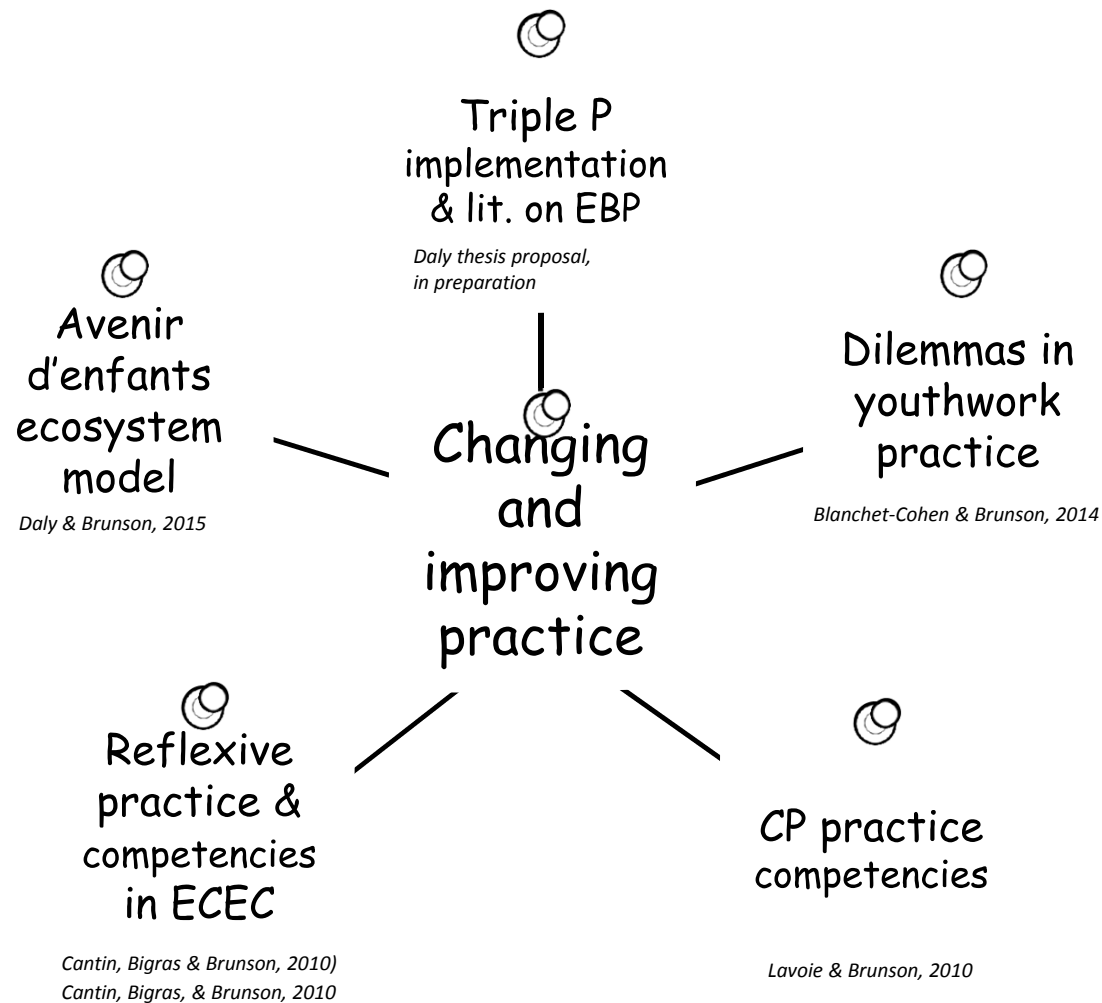


Social Sciences and Humanities
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sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Practice focus reflects a converging theme from several projects



Blanchet-Cohen, N., & Brunson, L. (2014). Creating settings for youth empowerment and leadership: An ecological perspective. *Child & Youth Services*, 35(3), 216–236.

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Daly, S. & Brunson, L. (2015). Supporting community mobilization with the ecosystemic model: The case of Avenir d'enfants. Paper presented at the 15th Biennial Conference of the Society for Community Research and Action, June 25, 2015, Lowell, MA.

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Triple P Implementation in Québec

- System wide implementation in two intervention sites
 - Circumscribed territory corresponding to health center service delivery area
 - Multiple partners
 - Community organizations, child welfare, local health center, early education and care centers
 - Five levels of intervention
 - Social marketing campaign
 - Triple P Seminar Series
 - Primary Care Triple P
 - Group Triple P
 - Enhanced Triple P

Triple P Implementation in Québec

- Triple P implementation
 - Offers a strong theoretical framework for intervening with families
 - Also offers a framework for understanding change at the systems level
 - Multi-level intervention for different levels of family needs that might exist in a population
 - In Montreal, two areas have emerged where practitioners seem to be seeking a conceptual framework to diagnose the situation and guide their actions
 - How to understand and coordinate change across multiple organizations
 - How to adapt this evidence-based program to local cultural contexts

Prinz, R. J., Sanders, M. R., Shapiro, C. J., Whitaker, D. J., & Lutzker, J. R. (2009). Population-based prevention of child maltreatment: The U.S. Triple P System population trial. *Prevention Science, 10*, 1–12. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-009-0123-3>

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Questions

- How do practitioners use and adapt program theory and combine it with their current practice models?
- How do they use practice models to organize their understanding of a problem and its possible solutions in particular situations?
 - Not just “Am I doing things right?” but also
 - “Am I doing the right things?” (Urban, 2012)
- How do change initiatives impact these frameworks/mental models?

Literature on the theory-practice relationship

- Lots of discussion of the importance of program theory for program development and evaluation
- At practitioner level, more of a focus on skills and competencies
- Little consideration of:
 - Theorizing by practitioners
 - How skills are embedded in larger structures of meaning

Islam, G. (forthcoming). Practitioners as theorists: para-ethnography and the collaborative study of contemporary organizations. *Organizational Research Methods*.

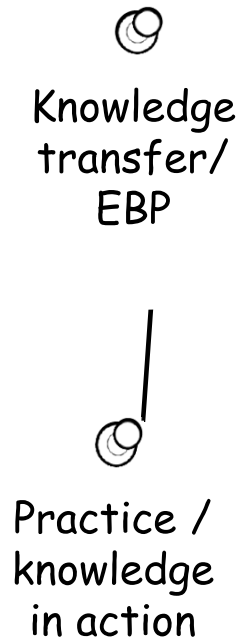
Gherardi, S., & Nicolini, D. (2000). To transfer is to transform: the circulation of safety knowledge. *Organization*, 7(2), 329–348. <http://doi.org/10.1177/135050840072008>

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Organizational knowledge & learning

- Two strands in literature (Marshall, 2008)
 - Cognitive based theories
 - “tend toward a static, functionalist and ultimately individualistic portrayal of learning as the passive acquisition of knowledge” (p. 214)
 - Practice-based theories
 - “emphasize the dynamic, processual and inescapably social and material character of knowing” (p. 414)
 - But “...tend to be rather silent on what it is that people know in order to make them active agents in the reproduction and potential transformation of practice”

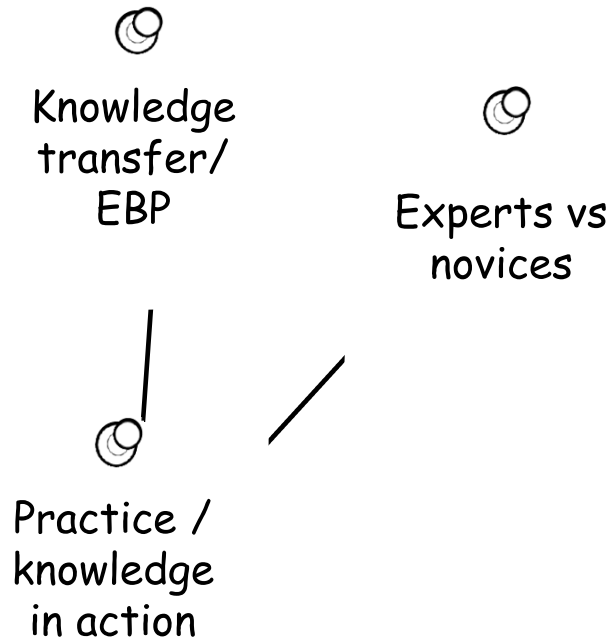
Literature addressing the theory-practice relationship



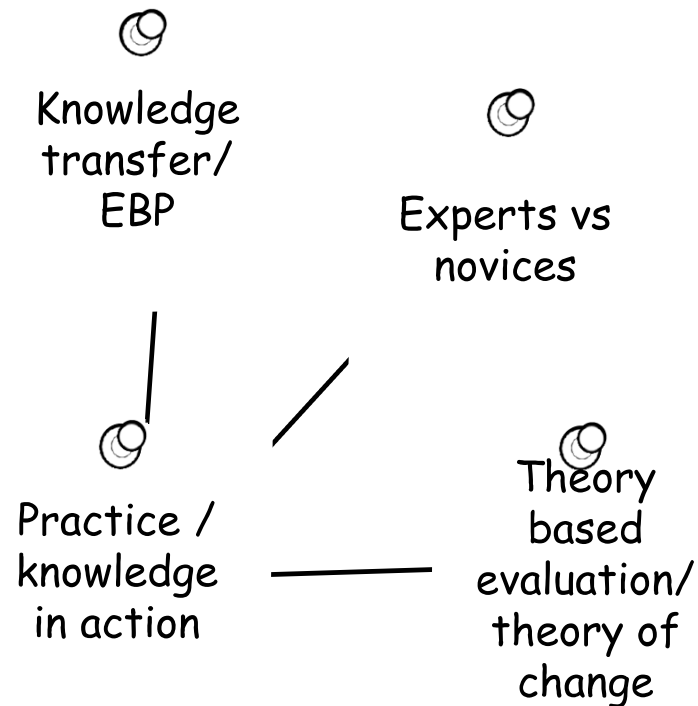
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Literature addressing the theory-practice relationship



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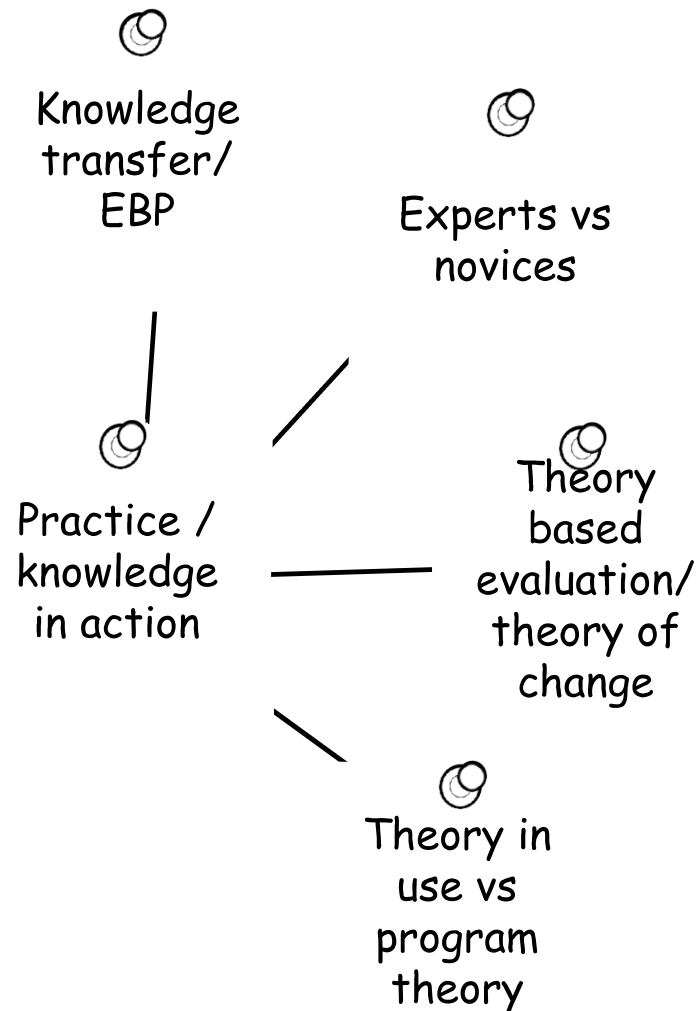
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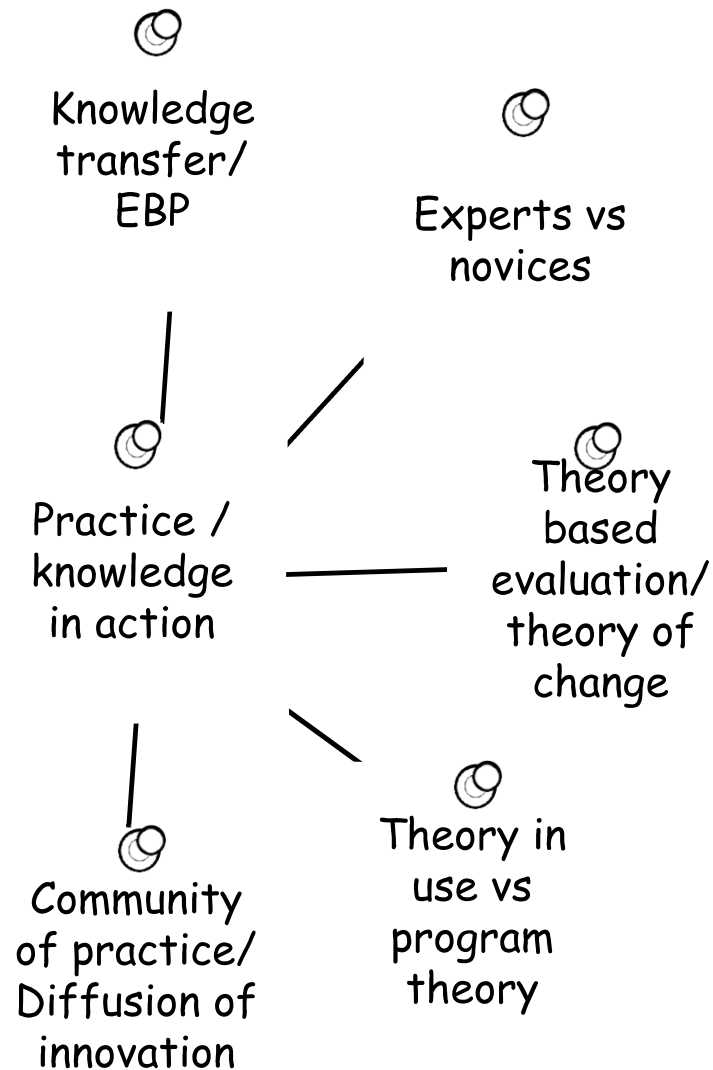
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Literature addressing the theory-practice relationship



Foster-Fishman, P. G., & Watson, E. R. (2011). The ABLe Change Framework: A conceptual and methodological tool for Promoting Systems Change. *AJCP*, 49 (3-4, 503-516 ; Miller, R. L., & Shinn, M. (2005). Learning from communities: Overcoming difficulties in dissemination of prevention and promotion efforts. *AJCP*, 35(3-4), 169-183. ; Riley, T., & Hawe, P. (2009). A typology of practice narratives during the implementation of a preventive, community intervention trial. *Implementation Science*, 4(1), 1-13.; Shern, D. L., Trochim, W. M. K., & LaComb, C. A. (1995). The use of concept mapping for assessing fidelity of model transfer: An example from psychiatric rehabilitation. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 18(2), 143-153; Yoshikawa, H., Wilson, P. A., Hsueh, J. A., Rosman, E. A., Chin, J., & Kim, J. H. (2003). What front-line CBO staff can tell us about culturally anchored theories of behavior change in HIV prevention for Asian/Pacific Islanders. *AJCP*, 32(1), 143-158.

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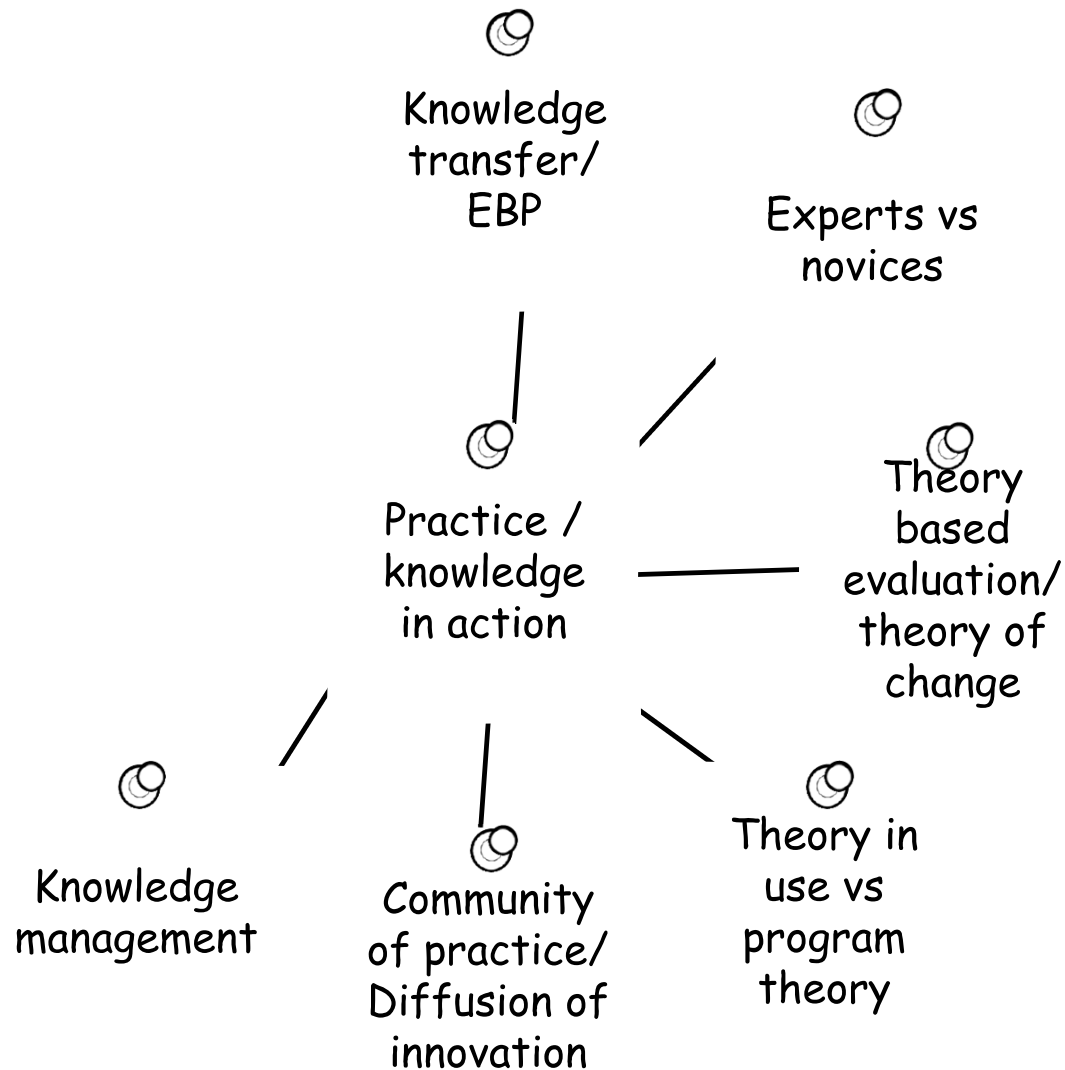


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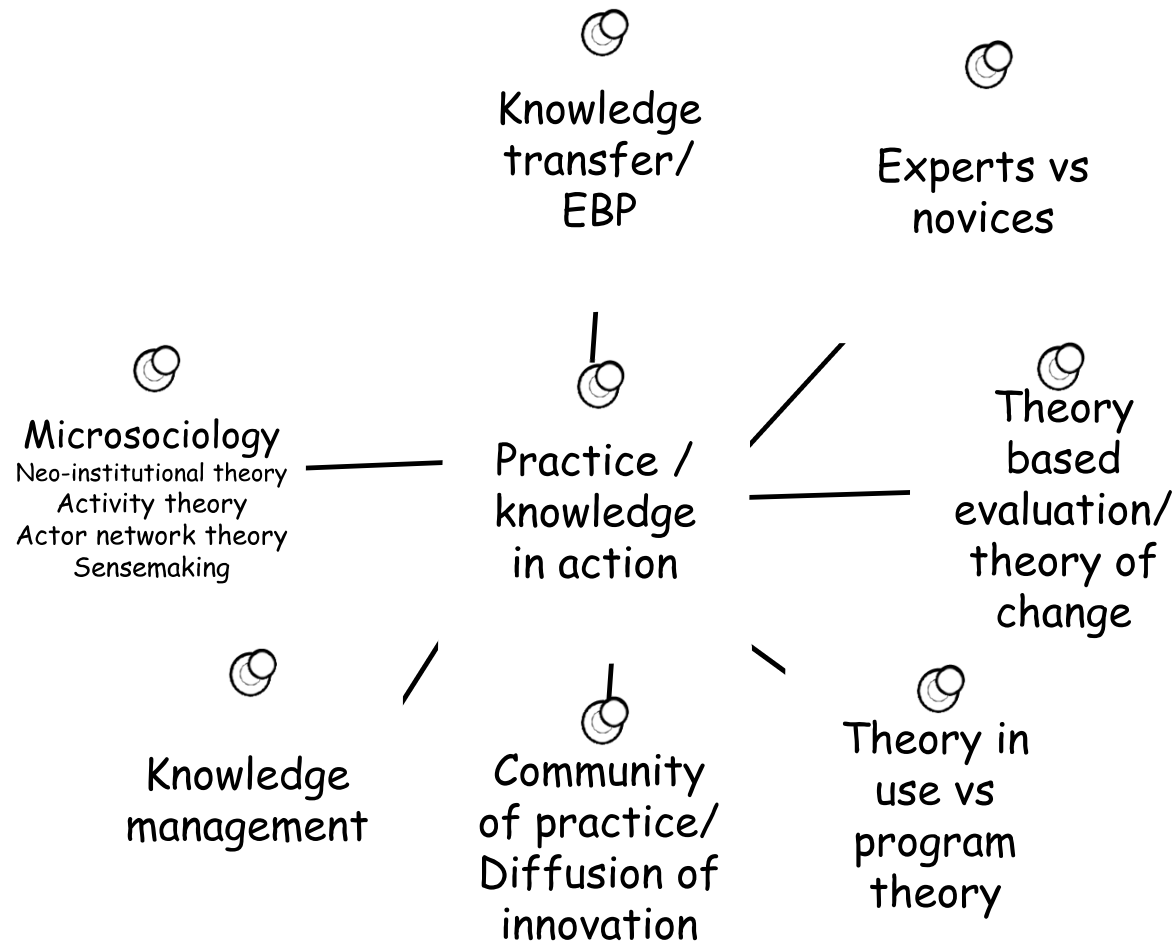
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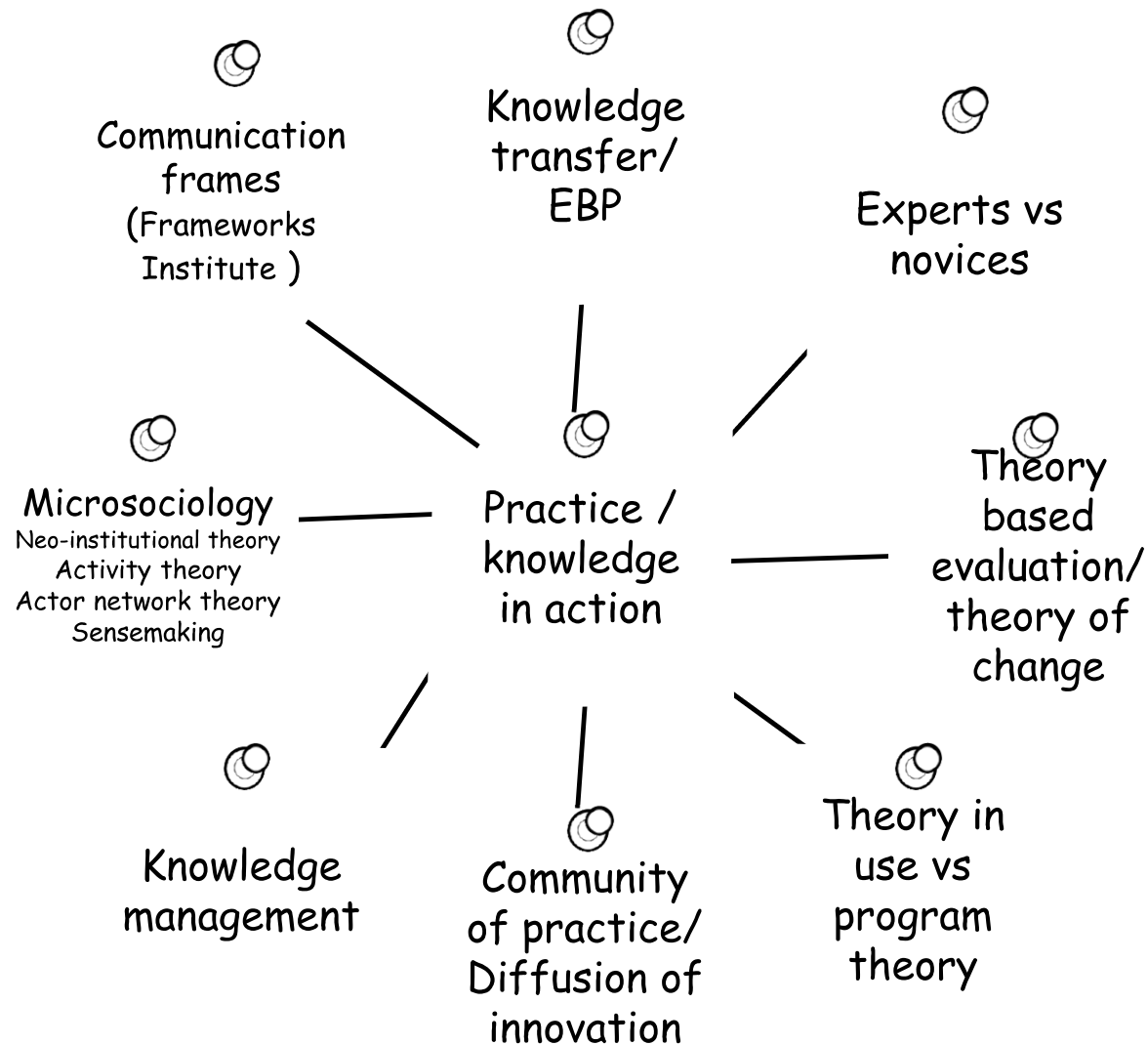
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Literature addressing the theory-practice relationship



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Literature addressing the theory-practice relationship



Organizational knowledge & learning

- Marshall's analysis & critique (2008)
 - Practice based approaches “...have avoided making reference to frameworks or models of thinking for fear of veering towards ...mentalism” (p. 419)
 - “...patterns of collective activity are, to some extent at least, enabled and guided by interlocking cognitive schemas that are, to a greater or lesser degree, generated, reproduced and modified by people participating in joint activities” (p. 419)
- *Link to activity setting theory and intersubjectivity?*
(O'Donnell, Tharp & Wilson, 1983)

Organizational knowledge & learning

- Marshall's analysis & critique (2008)
 - “it is not only knowledge of the rules that is needed, but also a practical sense of how and where they can be applied.
..[This is] not primarily a matter of conscious problem solving.
..Nevertheless, ... both normative expectations and the understanding of situations are guided by interpretative schemas, even if these are not necessarily consciously activated.”
 - Mental representations such as schemata and narratives “provide the crucial link between past, present and future that permits both the reproducibility and transformational capacity of practices” (p. 421)

Frameworks Institute

- People use mental shortcuts to make sense of the world.
 - “These mental shortcuts rely on “frames,” or a small set of internalized concepts and values that allow us to accord meaning to unfolding events and new information...
 - “Frames can be triggered by various elements, such as language choices and different messengers or images...”
 - Baltes (2003) Frameworks Institute ezine, *A Five-Minute Refresher Course in Framing*
 - “Frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.”
 - Stephen D. Reese, *Framing Public Life*, 2001 cited in Baltes, 2003
- Perhaps frames would be a useful way of exploring the theory-practice relationship and understanding how practitioners develop and apply theoretical models in their practice

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