In the conventional notion of knowledge translation investigators derive and address research questions in traditional ways, using discipline based methods. Knowledge is translated in a one-way fashion, from research to practice, or bench to bedside. According to Gibbons (2008) knowledge translation is a process of engagement and exchange, a conversation among stakeholders that requires specific, complex skills to promote interaction at every stage of the research process.

Knowledge is generated in theoretical/experimental environments, and is applied and managed, and technology is transferred. Research is interdisciplinary, derived from preexisting disciplines and contributing to the formation of new disciplines. Research communities are limited by traditional communication tools, which lend themselves to orderly environments, and is applied and managed, and technology is transferred. Research is interdisciplinary, derived from preexisting disciplines and contributing to the formation of new disciplines. Research communities are limited by traditional communication tools, which lend themselves to orderly environments, and is applied and managed, and technology is transferred.

Knowledge Exchange

Knowledge Translation

Knowledge is generated in theoretical/experimental environments, and is applied and managed, and technology is transferred.

Research is interdisciplinary, derived from preexisting disciplines and contributing to the formation of new disciplines.

Research communities are limited by traditional communication tools, which lend themselves to orderly environments, and is applied and managed, and technology is transferred.

Scientific peers provide quality control.

Transaction Space

Allows for open exchange of ideas across disciplinary and institutional boundaries

Boundary Work

The activities required to facilitate and manage relationships in the transaction space.

Boundary Objects

Facilitate knowledge exchange among participants.

The Study Advisory Team: A Transaction Space

The Study Advisory Team Activities: Boundary Work

The Study Advisory Team: A Transaction Space

Sharing Power Leads to Trust

By implementing shared project management and promoting the active involvement of stakeholders, the SAT successfully developed trust and enhanced commitment to the research.

Sharing Knowledge and Expertise Leads to Respect

Mutual respect develops when partners share knowledge and expertise. The UUMS team shared information about research strategies, while MA/DCF partners shared information about experiences in the field, provided access to key informants, and shared experiences in previous research initiatives.

Communication Leads to Shared Understanding

Open communication facilitates the development of mutual mentoring relationships, allowing study partners and stakeholders to learn about and adapt to the time frames, priorities, contingencies, and values of each other’s dynamic organizations. FNIS partners and stakeholders spent a great deal of time discussing their respective organizations’ roles, responsibilities, languages, norms, and physical environments.

Shared Experiences Lead to a Learning Community

MA/DCF partners reflected on agency activities and study findings, while providing UUMS partners with the opportunity to contextualize research results. The FNIS was a collaborative, iterative process in which findings from each phase of research were used to develop subsequent phases. FNIS partners developed working relationships and provided each other with the knowledge necessary to contribute to, implement, and benefit from the research.

Concept Mapping: A Boundary Object

Concept mapping is a participatory approach to organizing the ideas of a large group that combines qualitative methods, e.g., brainstorming, with quantitative methods, e.g., multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. Comprehensive maps are generated that visually display results. Focus groups were conducted with a purposive sample of MA/DCF social workers and supervisors, family advocates, providers, and the SAT. Focus group participants brainstormed items related to change, sorted them into conceptual groups, and rated them for importance and feasibility. The results and feedback from participants determined study change domains, and informed further data collection procedures.