FRIENDS OR FOES?
Theory of Change,
Systemic Design (Thinking),
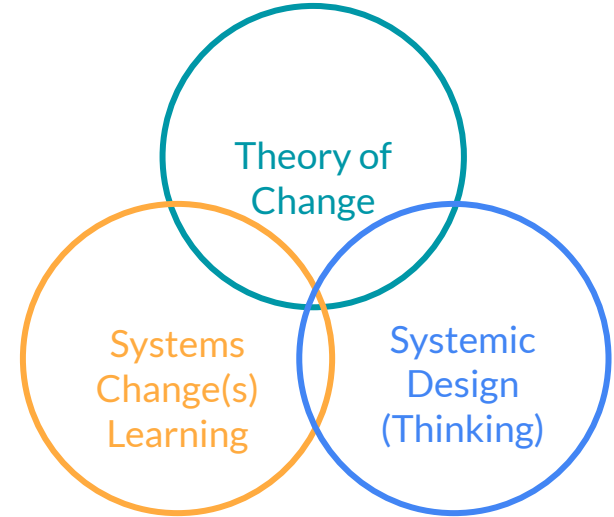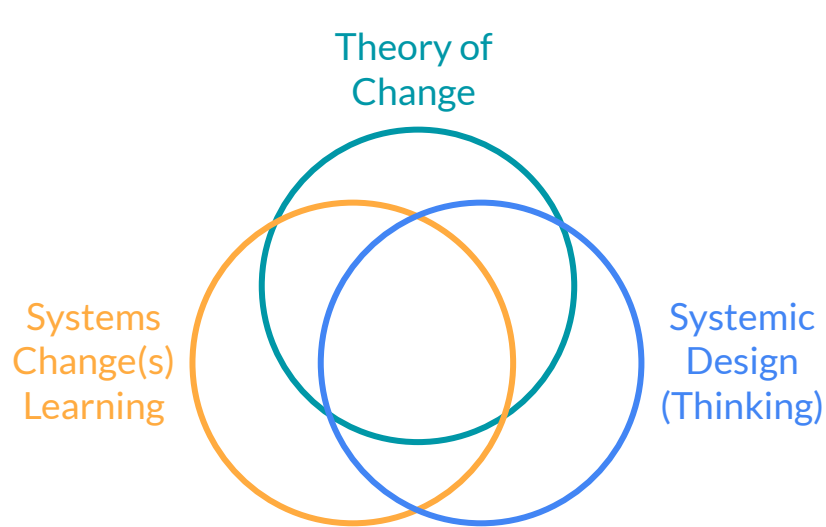## Systems Changes Learning

Relating Systems Thinking & Design (RSD) #10

Friday, November 5, 2021 | 6:30pm Netherlands / 1:30pm Toronto
Zaid Khan, David Ing

Today, we'll discuss:

Do ToC, SDT and SCL overlap to a greater or less extent?
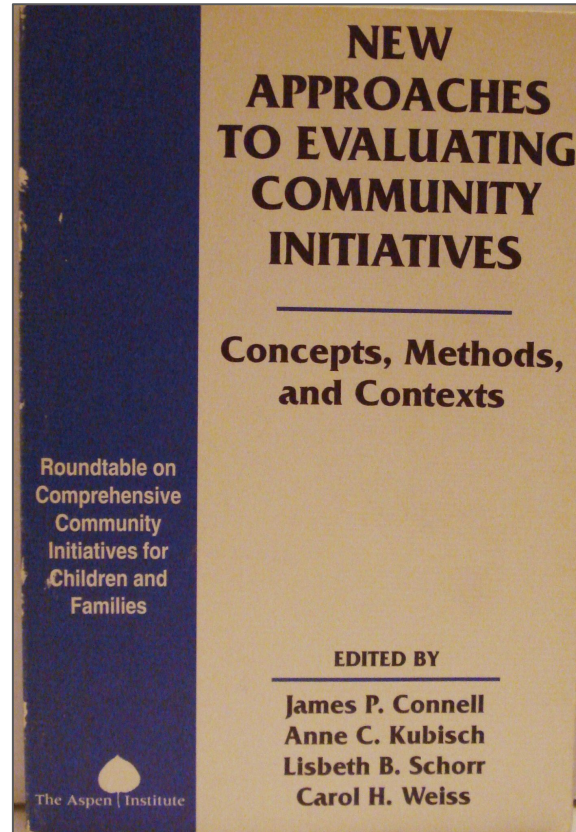**Can or should that overlap see further integration or separation?**

To situate the dialogue, we provide some (very limited) setup info per approach:
- Context
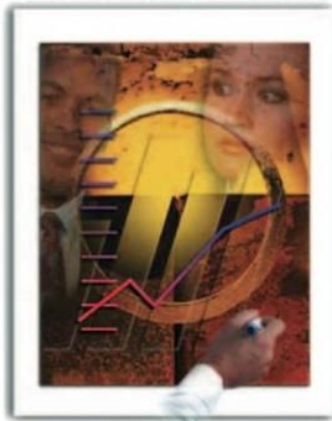- Examples
- Discussions

Theory of Change

Theory of Change
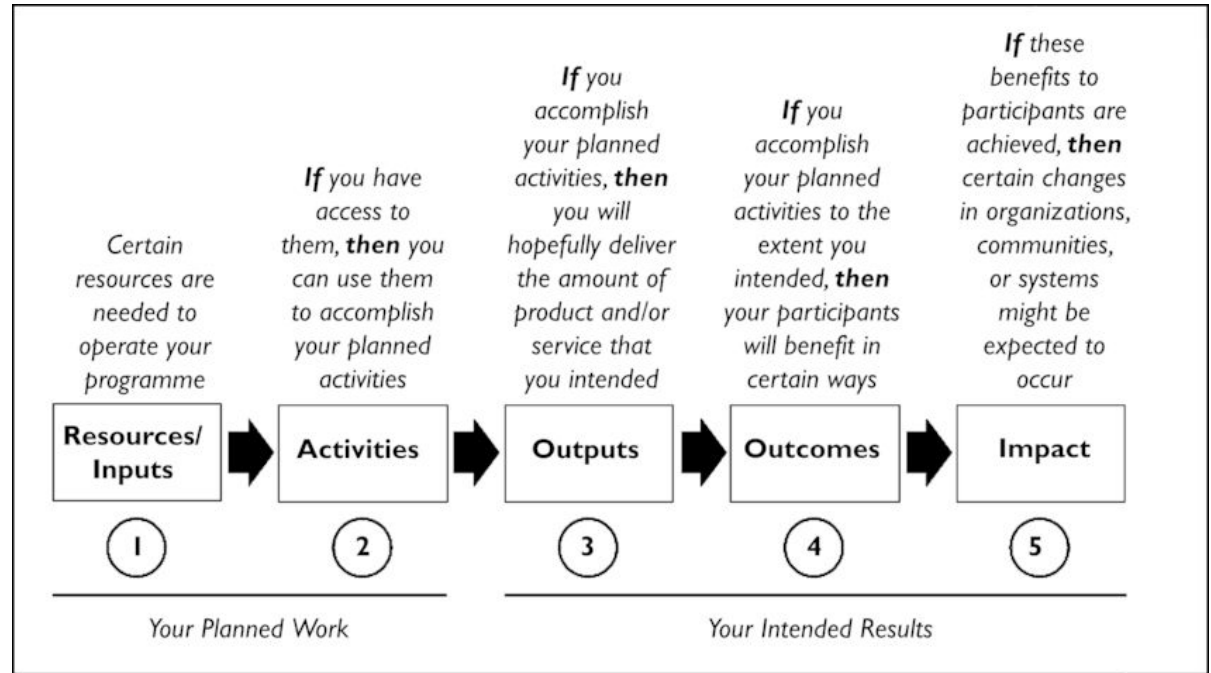
Origins in modelling and evaluating community initiatives

Theory of Change

Framework for evaluation, sequential logic

W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Evaluation Handbook

Resources/ Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Certain resources are needed to operate your programme	*If* you have access to them, **then** you can use them to accomplish your planned activities	*If* you accomplish your planned activities, **then** you will hopefully deliver the amount of product and/or service that you intended	*If* you accomplish your planned activities to the extent you intended, **then** your participants will benefit in certain ways	*If* these benefits to participants are achieved, **then** certain changes in organizations, communities, or systems might be expected to occur
1	2	3	4	5

Your Planned Work — Your Intended Results
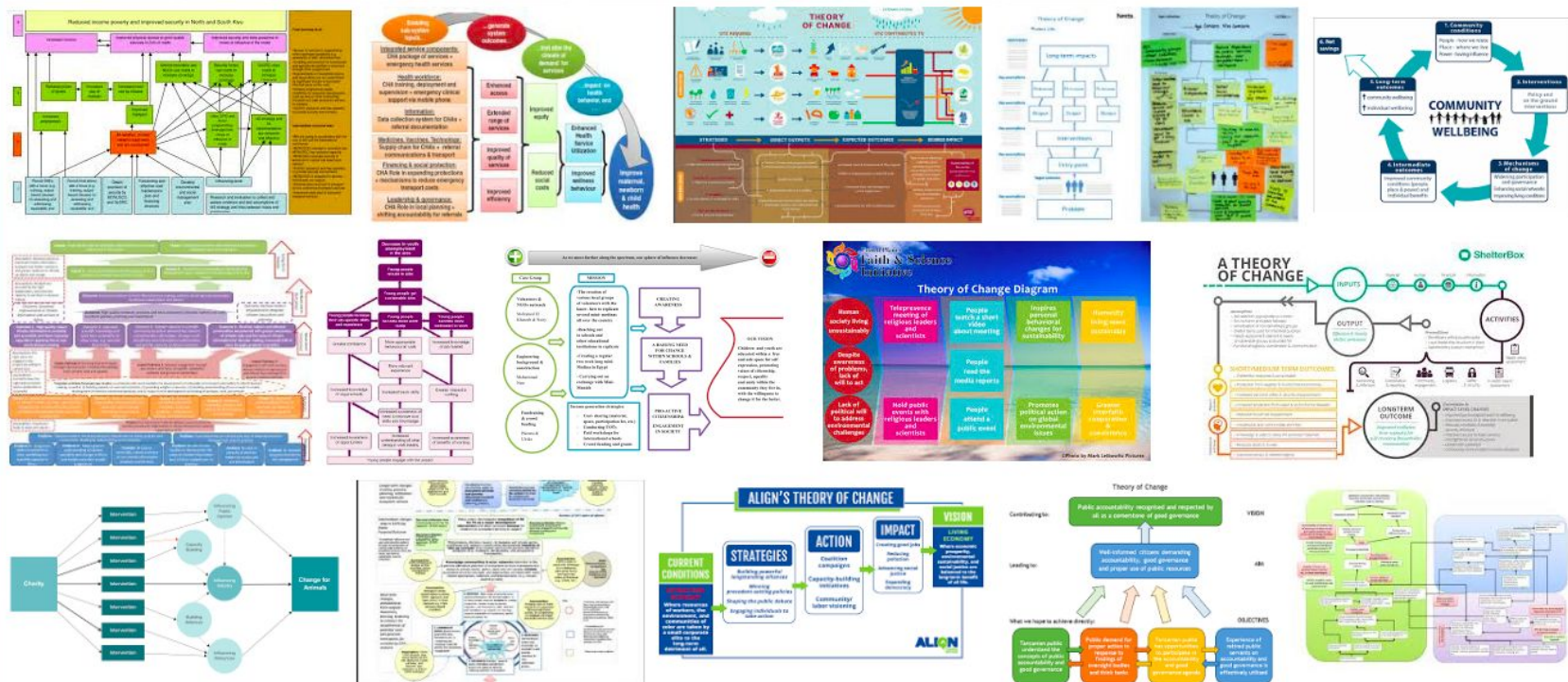
Theory of Change

**Uptake in social sector
(non-profits, philanthropy, foundations, gov't, etc.)**

Theory of Change
Logic models

Literally, 1000s of variations of visual representations….
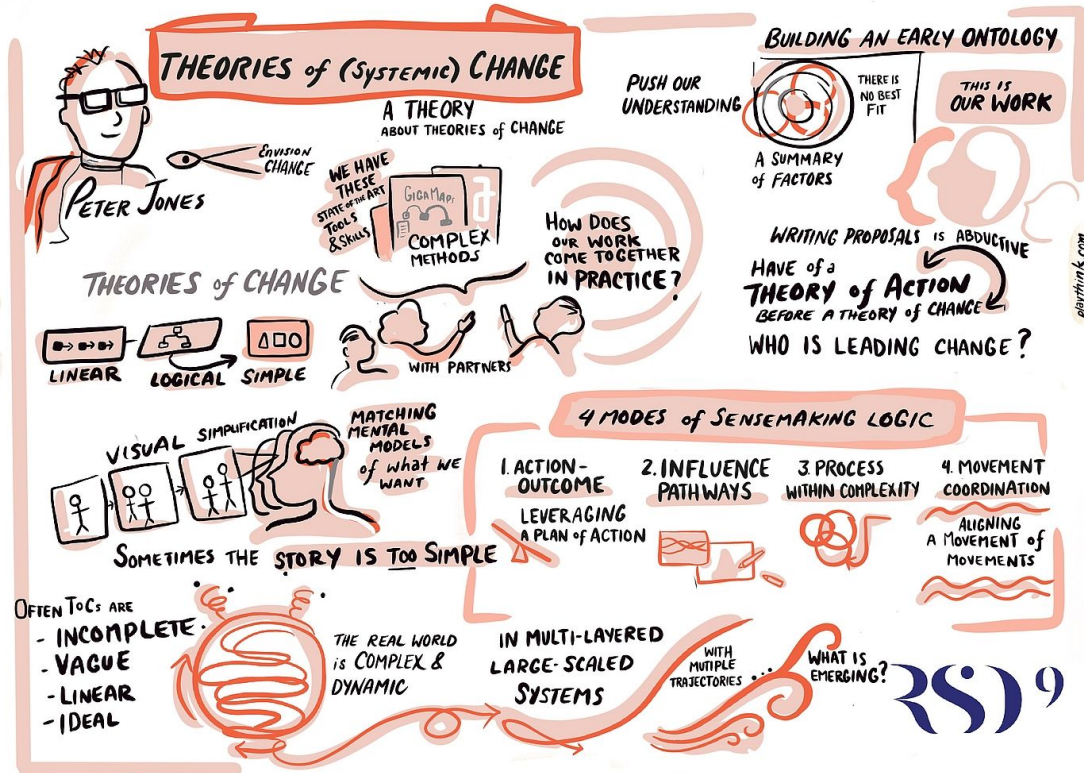
Theory of Change
The Field

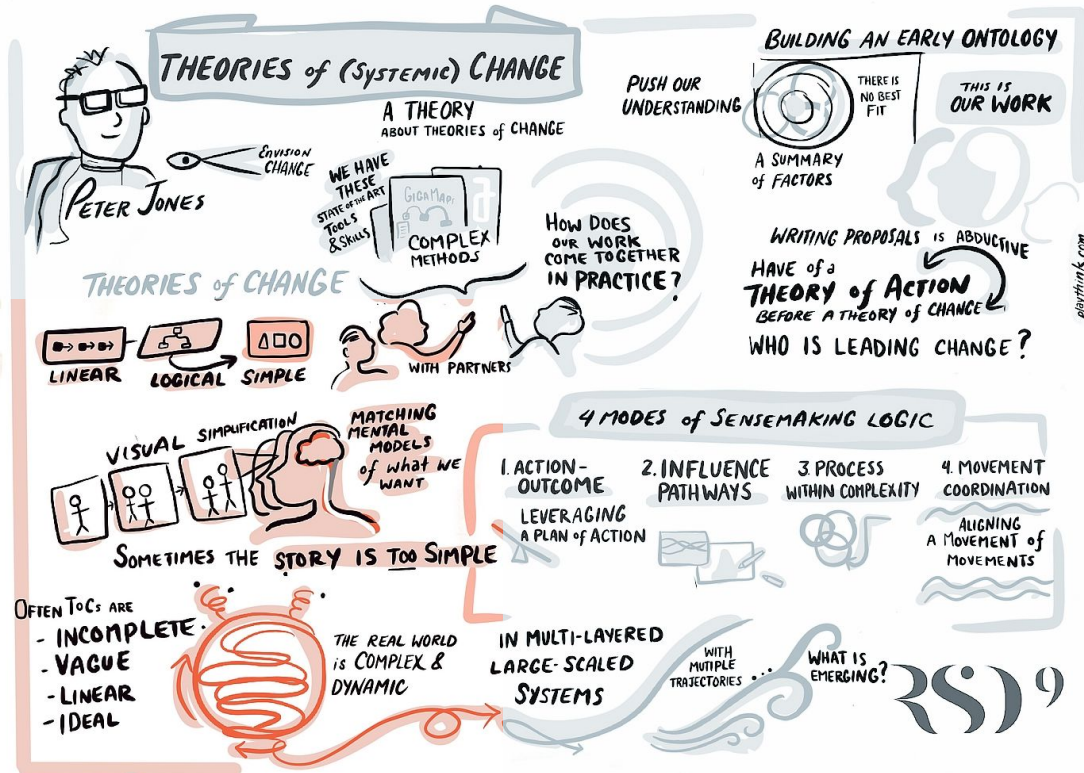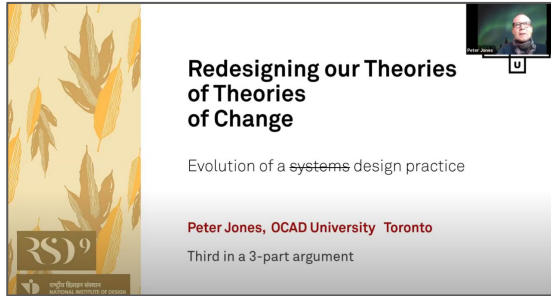**+ 100s more** orgs, has become ubiquitous across social impact sector

Discussion

Theory of Change
Discussion

Theory of Change
Discussion

Redesigning our Theories
of Theories
of Change

Evolution of a ~~systems~~ design practice

Peter Jones, OCAD University Toronto

Third in a 3-part argument

"We have all used "theories of change" to argue for the process by which envisioned change programs might achieve their goals, whether we call them so or not. [...] Looking back at the proceedings, I see that RSD has rarely used this language and we do not have many if any, talks dealing with the theory of change.

*The RSD community has a responsibility to **better understand the framing, theory, and proposals entailed in systems change,** even if only to better collaborate as designers working with the social change community."*
(Jones, 2020)

Systemic Design

Systemic Design

Definitions revolve around integration of systems thinking and design thinking/methods

SYSTEMIC
DESIGN
ASSOCIATION

SYSTEMIC DESIGN

noun / si-ˈste-mik di-ˈzīn /

: an interdiscipline that joins systems thinking to design methodology

Systemic Design

Definitions revolve around integration of systems thinking and design thinking/methods

*"Systemic design **integrates** the mindsets and toolsets of **systems thinking** and **design thinking** to understand and intervene in complex situations."* (Ryan, 2014).

Systemic Design

**Definitions revolve around integration of
systems thinking and design thinking/methods**

Translational Systems Sciences 8

Peter Jones · Kyoichi Kijima *Editors*

Systemic Design

Theory, Methods, and Practice

Springer
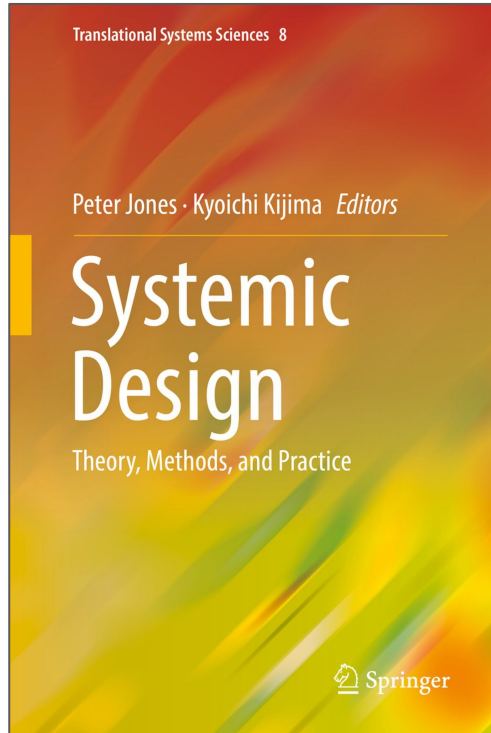
*"By **integrating systems thinking** and its methods, systemic design brings **human**-**centred design** to complex, multi-stakeholder service systems. It adapts from known design competencies – form and process reasoning, social and generative research methods, and sketching and visualization practices – to de-scribe, map, propose and reconfigure complex social systems."*
(Jones, 2018).

Systemic Design
Principles shared between systems and design

SPRINGER NATURE
Reference

Gary S. Metcalf
Kyoichi Kijima
Hiroshi Deguchi *Editors*

Handbook of Systems Sciences

Springer
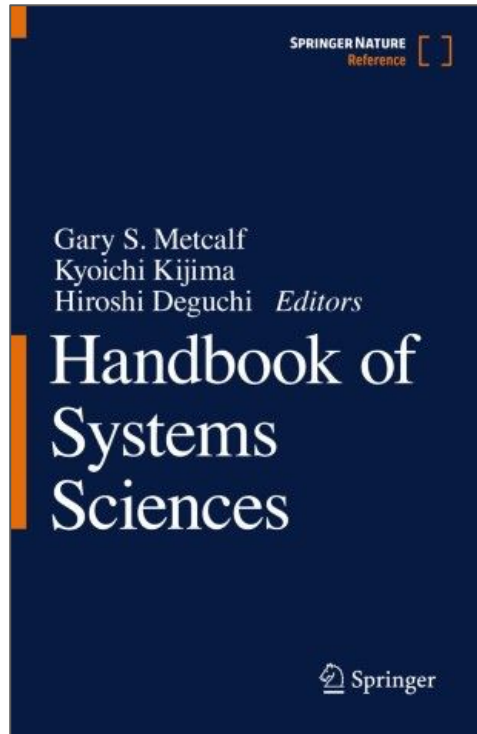
1. *Idealization* is an ideal state or set of conditions that compels action toward a desirable outcome or signifies the value of a future system or practice.
2. **Appreciating complexity** acknowledges the dynamic complexity of multi-causal (wicked) problems and the cognitive factors involved in understanding the relationships within the problem's complexity.
3. *Purpose finding* defines a process of iterative purpose seeking, recognizing that purposes are constructed interdependently with stakeholders in language and can be determined by agreement, and designed or redesigned.
4. *Boundary framing* is the principle of determining the most effective fit between a concept and its target environment, considered as both concept framing and boundary critique.
5. *Requisite variety* in design proposes that, whether in a social system or information system, the functional complexity of a given design must be calibrated to and provide sufficient options for interacting with the known and potential factors of its target environment complexity.
6. *Feedback coordination* describes the identification of critical feedback relationships (first-n order) in social and technological systems for coordinating the dynamic fit to environmental and contextual functions.
7. *System ordering* defines the function of design as a process of coordinated formation of options, including information, assets, organizations, and social systems, in meaningful ways by human custodians. Designers define humanly useful structures that enable visibility and salience within complex situations.
8. *Generative emergence* describes the selection of emergent manifestations for design signification. *Compositional* emergence manifests in design activity as an outcome of *ordering*, from artificial microsystems that adapt an artifact to environments. *Created* emergence manifests from *organizing* systems, which include physical connections, designed forms, organizing processes, and the synergies that emerge from among these functions.
9. *Continuous adaptation* is maintaining through adaptation a preferred system purpose and objectives (or desiderata) throughout the lifecycle of conformance to environmental demands and related system changes.
10. *Self-organizing* in design enables actions that increase awareness, incentives, and social motivations to accelerate organizing behaviors.
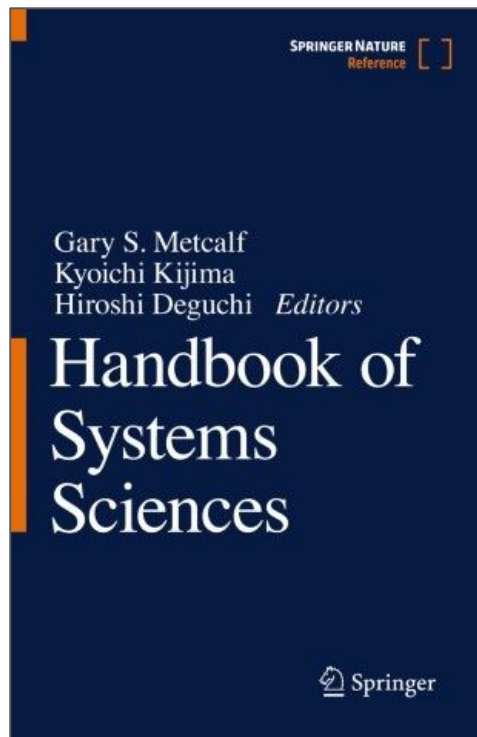
Systemic Design
Context: methods
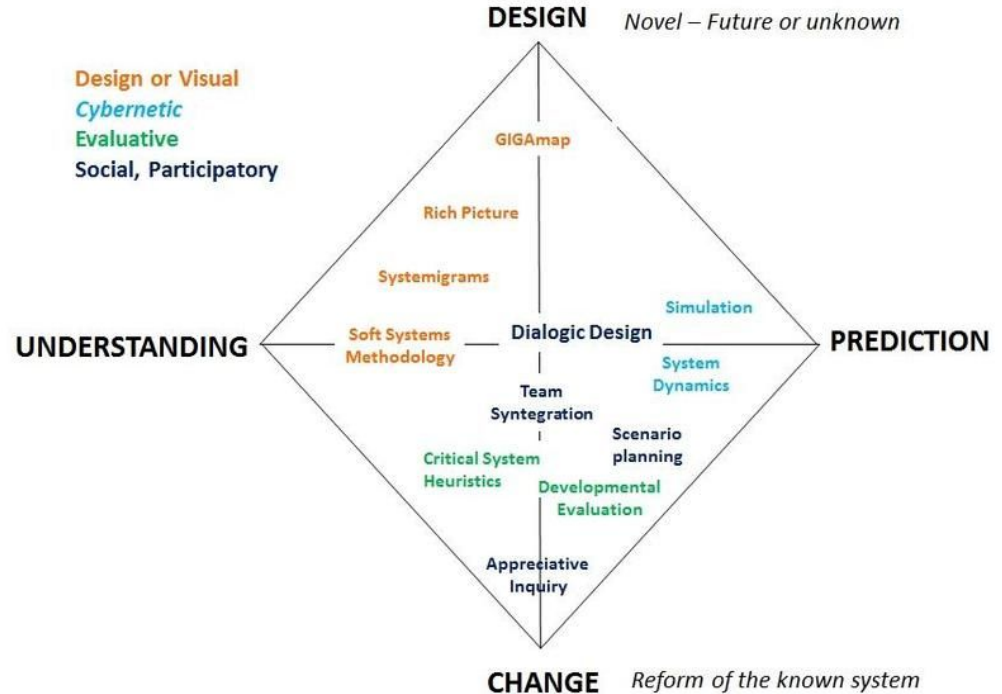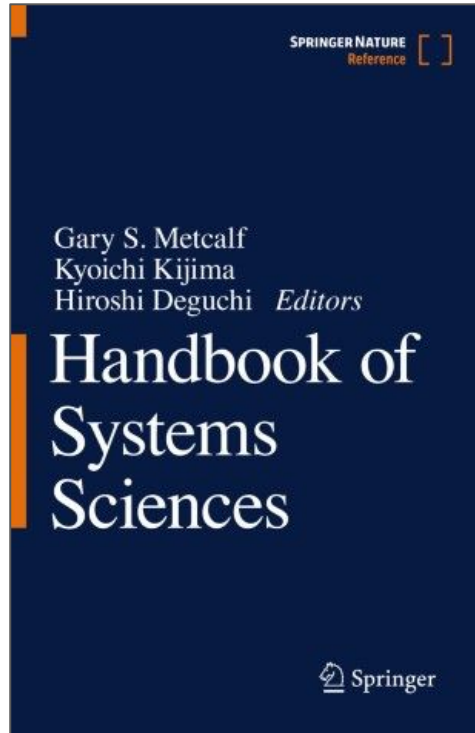
Systemic Design
Context: methods (cont'd)

Planning and Analytical Methods
- Stakeholder analysis
- Transition planning (Geels 2005)
- Scenario planning

Visual and Conceptual Methods
- Gigamaps (Sevaldson 2008)
- Synthesis maps (Jones and Bowes 2017)
- Rich picture (Checkland 2000)
- Modeling (Visual models)
- System mapping (Blair et al. 2007)
- Soft systems methodology (Checkland 2000)
- Three horizons (Curry and Hodgson 2008)

Simulation and Gaming
- Games
- Network centrality analysis (Murphy and Jones 2019)
- Agent-based models
- System dynamics (Forrester 1994)

Critical and Evaluative Methods
- Activity theory (Kaptelinin and Nardi 2006)
- Boundary critique, critical heuristics (Ulrich 1983)
- Developmental evaluation (Patton 1994)

Participatory and Cocreative Methods
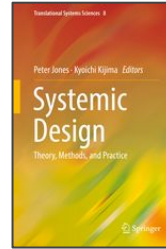- Generative workshops (Sanders and Stappers 2013)
- Dialogic design (Christakis and Bausch 2006)
- Team syntegration (Beer 1994)
- Appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastava 1987)

SPRINGER NATURE
Reference

Gary S. Metcalf
Kyoichi Kijima
Hiroshi Deguchi   *Editors*

Handbook of
Systems
Sciences

Springer

Systemic Design
The Field
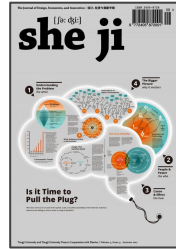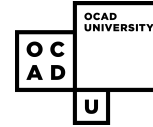
Systemic Design
In Action

Systemic Design
Artefacts: Maps

RSD10 SYSTEMS MAPS (17) | USE ARROWS TO SCROLL

O'AHU AND THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

PLASTIC WAVE – PLASTIC POLLUTION IS A RESULT OF WHO WE ARE

SYNERGETIC LANDSCAPE

THE FUTURE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE TECH SECTOR

Systemic Design
Recent Frameworks

SIX PRINCIPLES FOR SYSTEMIC DESIGN

Our set of six principles aims to guide activity. They can be used to help people to develop or adapt new design methods and tools from their own practice:

PEOPLE AND PLANET CENTRED
Focusing on the shared benefits of all living things

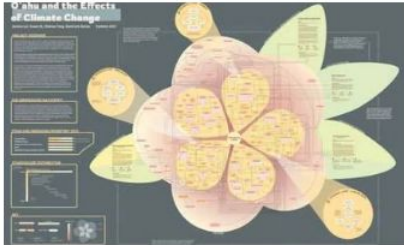**ZOOMING IN AND OUT**
From the micro to macro, from root cause to hopeful vision, from the present to the future, from the personal to the wider system

TESTING AND GROWING IDEAS
Making things to see how they work and help more things emerge

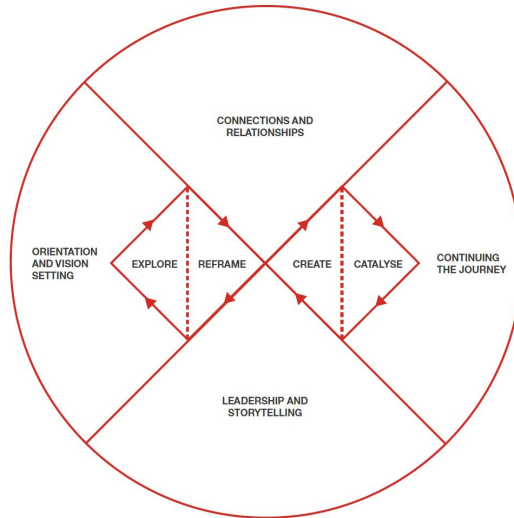**INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING DIFFERENCE**
Creating safe, shared spaces and language to bring in multiple and marginalised perspectives

COLLABORATING AND CONNECTING
Seeing a project as one element in a wider movement for change

CIRCULAR AND REGENERATIVE
focus on existing assets – physical and social – and how we can re-use, nurture and grow these

The Systemic Design Practice Wheel
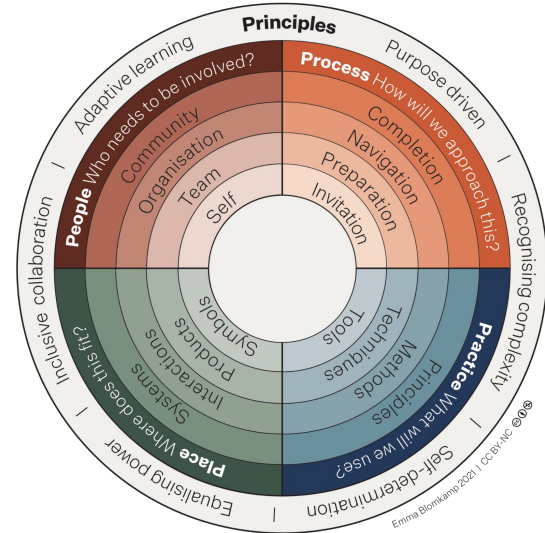
(Blomkamp, 2021)

Systemic Design
Recent Discussions

06-28-21

The most popular design thinking strategy is BS

The 'How might we' design prompt is insidious, and it's time to bury it.

TOUCHPOINT VOL. 12 NO. 2 - APRIL 2021

The Systems Turn in Service Design

SERIES: NextD Futures

RETHINKING
DESIGN THINKING

MAKING SENSE OF THE FUTURE THAT HAS ALREADY ARRIVED

GK VanPatter

Author of INNOVATION METHODS MAPPING:
De-Mystifying 50+ Years of Innovation Process Design

CONTRIBUTORS: Elizabeth Pastor & Peter Jones PhD
HUMANTIFIC & NextDesign Leadership Network
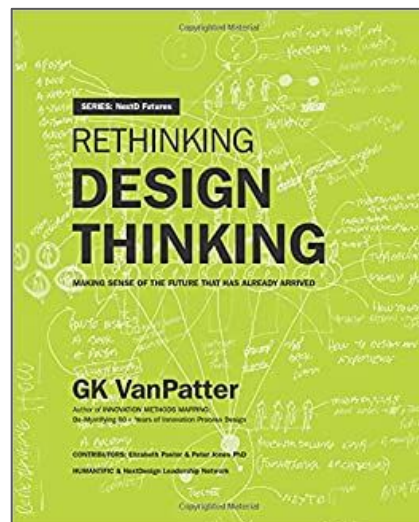
Systemic Design
Recent Discussions

23- Systemic Design as a Hegemonic Force

FORMAT: WORKSHOPS, RSD10, TOPIC: METHODS & METHODOLOGY

THURS 04 | 13-14:30hr. Alberto Soriano, Josina Vink and Shivani Prakash

cancelled?

SPRINGER NATURE
Reference

Gary S. Metcalf
Kyoichi Kijima
Hiroshi Deguchi *Editors*

Handbook of
Systems
Sciences

Springer
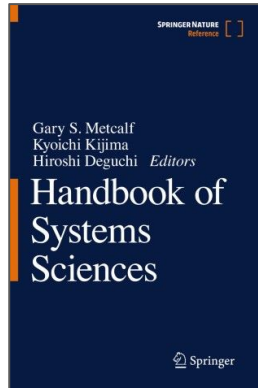
*"The current field of systemic design practice and study recognizes the **lack of broad recognition or acceptance of the field**, and **many projects of real complexity remain in the prototype stages**. Yet, an expanding discourse community and a flourishing literature has demonstrated the sustainable value of this emerging field of theory, practice, and study."*
(Jones, 2021)

Systems Changes Learning

Systems Changes Learning

Distinction to make, between "Systems Change" as emerging field and practise, and "Systems Changes Learning" as a methodology and reorientation

Systems change: a field building convening

Wasan Island, Canada
18th - 21st June 2018

Illuminate: Cultivating the field of systems change practice

ILLUMINATE

THE SYSTEMS SANCTUARY • FORUM FOR THE FUTURE • SCHOOL OF SYSTEM CHANGE • GF • CoCreative • TURTLE ISLAND INSTITUTE • ISC Institute for Strategic Clarity • Pisces Foundation • Academy for Systems Change • Lankelly Chase • McConnell
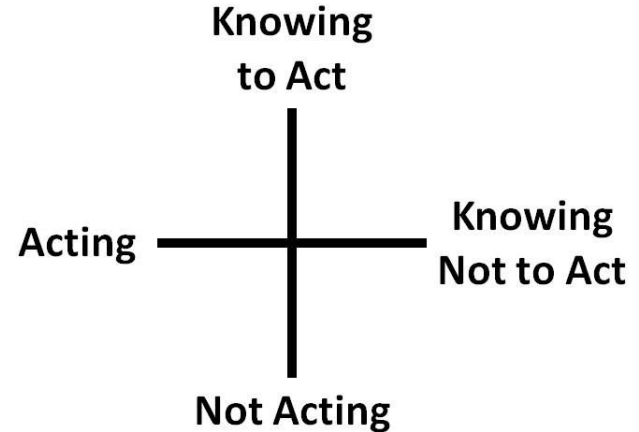
Systems Changes Learning takes post-colonial orientation that de-centers the human's ability to enact change via *Wei* and *Wu Wei*

Knowing to Act
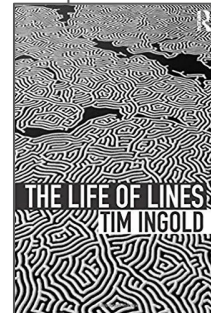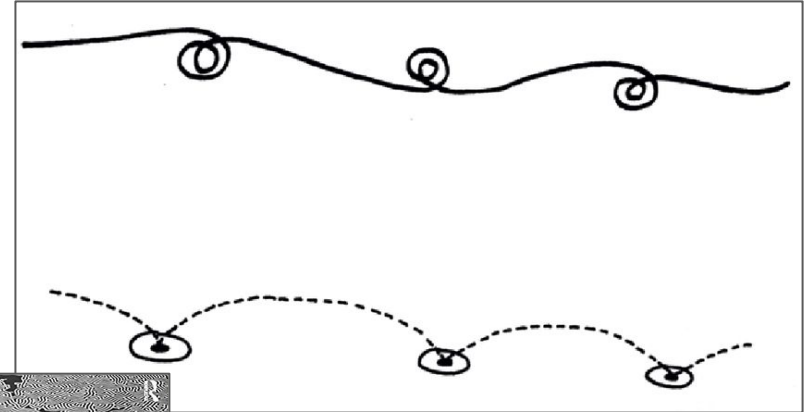
Acting — Knowing Not to Act

Not Acting

Systems Changes Learning

Shift in worldview from static-mechanistic view to processual-living view

Systems Changes Learning emphasizes a processual view that considers viewpoint "…over time"

Systems Changes Learning

Integrates philosophies from both orientations

Linear-Sequential Logical Positivism	Schools of Philosophy	Systems Changes Learning
Intention Problem -> Solution	Which (phenomena, perception)	**Attending/Attention** Wicked Messes
Human Will Mechanical, Linear causation	What? (ontos, becoming)	**Living Beings** Fluid course of nature
Dynamic Equilibria Engineering resilience	Why? (ontos, becoming)	**Regime Shifts** Ecological Resilience
Scaling Technocracy Lawful order	Whom, when, where? (phronesis, situated action)	**Practical Wisdom** Negotiated Order
Freeze-Change-Unfreeze Behavioural Change	How? (techne, skills + tools)	**Social Practice** Affordances

Systems Changes Learning

**Inquiry goes beyond science -> as search for better answers,
with philosophy -> as *search for better questions***

(1) Learning **Which**
shifts matter

(2) Learning **What**
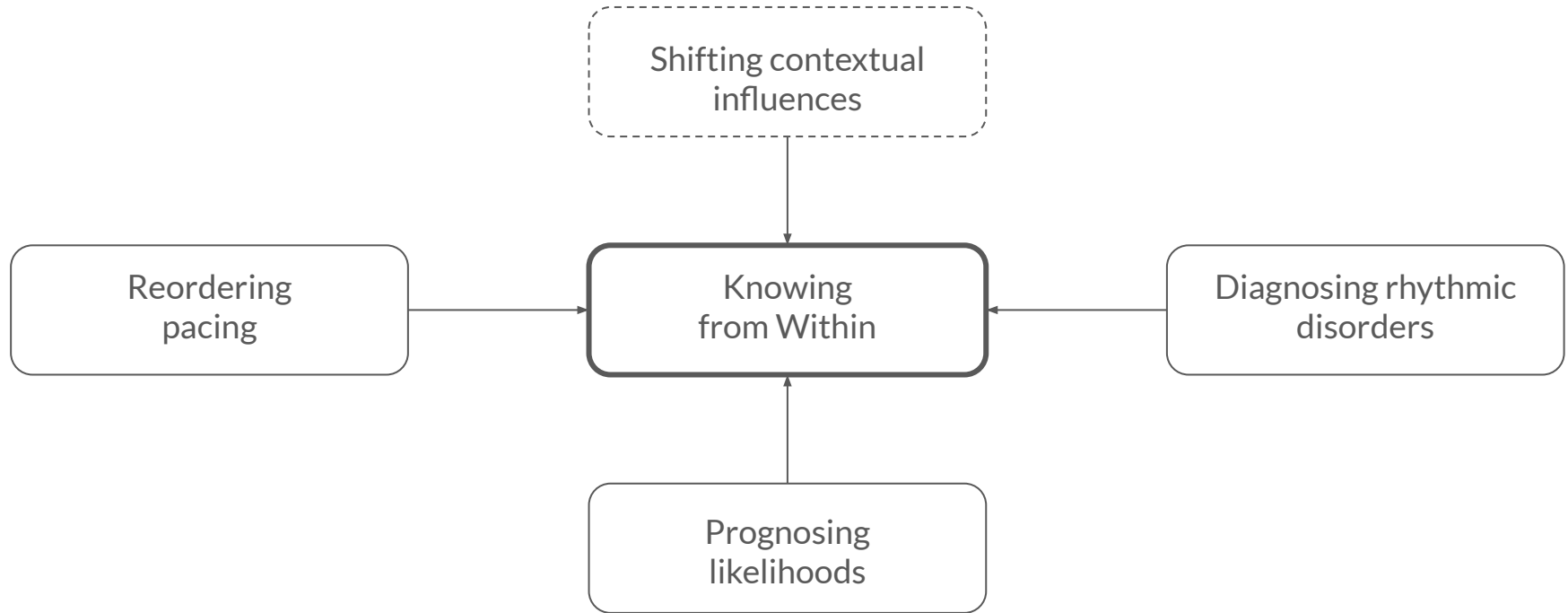**rhythmic disorders prevail**

(3) Learning **Why**
a prognosis is preferred

(4) Learning **Whom-When-Where**
resets are valued or disfavoured

(5) Learning **How**
new ways become everyday practice

Systems Changes Learning

"Learning" here appreciates "*knowing from within*"

Summary:

Theory of Change -- linear, logic model to map actions to outcome, uptake & popularity in social sector and grantmaking/funding

Systemic Design -- integrates systems thinking & design for complex problems, design artefacts show utility, emerging real-world case studies and results tbd

Systems Changes Learning -- processual view of change via post-colonial orientation, looks at systems changes _over time_, to "learn from within" the systems about its **nature** and inactions or actions to take towards different states of balance

Let's discuss:
- **What are your experiences with these tools / practices / fields?**
- **What similarities have you found between them?**
- **What differences are most discerning to you?**
- **Can or should these see further integration or separation?**

Theory of Change

Systems Change(s) Learning

Systemic Design (Thinking)

Theory of Change

Systems Change(s) Learning

Systemic Design (Thinking)