

# Change Champions 2010

Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary,  
transdisciplinary....

Dawn Skidmore



**Government  
of South Australia**

---

SA Health



# Introduction

- > M-D, I-D and T-D working
- > Share with you learning from some Transdisciplinary models in SA
- > What might this all mean for future service delivery as well as education?



# Terminology

- > Team work involving multiple disciplines is increasingly emphasised as the way forward (Nolan M 1995).
- > The terms multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary are increasingly used but are ambiguously defined and interchangeably used within the literature and practice (Whitfield K 2004)
- > There is therefore a need to agree on definitions and use the terms appropriately



## Common terms (Choi et al 2006)

- > Multidisciplinary draws on knowledge from different disciplines but individuals stay within the boundaries of their traditional professions
- > Interdisciplinary analyses, synthesises and harmonises links between disciplines into a co-ordinated and coherent whole
- > Transdisciplinary integrates the learning from the disciplines in to a new context and transcends their traditional boundaries

## Everyday food example.....



- > Multidisciplinary is like a salad bowl (the ingredients remain in tact and clearly distinguishable)
- > Interdisciplinary is like a risotto (the ingredients are only partially distinguishable)
- > Transdisciplinary is like a smoothie (the ingredients are no longer distinguishable and the final product is a different kind from the initial ingredients)



## Mathematically.....

- > Multidisciplinary is analogous to  $2+2=4$   
(additive in a linear combination)
- > Interdisciplinary is analogous to  $2+2=5$   
(deviation from linear combination)
- > Transdisciplinary analogous to  
 $2+2=\text{yellow}$   
(outcome is a completely new order)



# Transdisciplinary Models

- > Rural and remote Paediatric services
- > Community Services
- > Aged Care Teams
- > Acute Medical Assessment Units

# Transdisciplinary approach

- > Benefits:
  - increased capacity and flexibility
  - increased parent satisfaction and capability
  - improved productivity





# Critical Success Factors

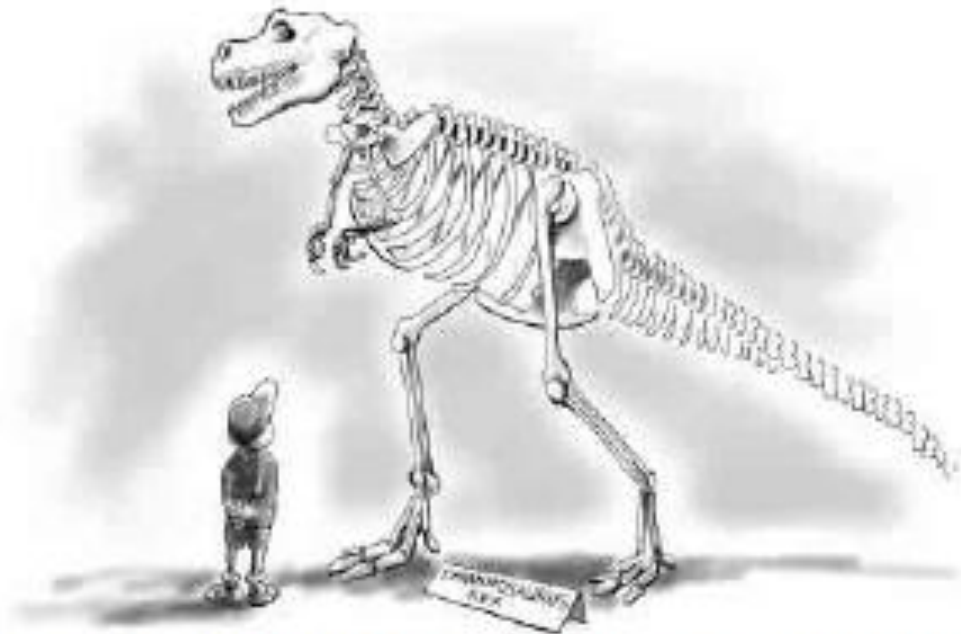
- > Effective teamwork
- > Good communication
- > Role clarity
- > Commitment to the philosophy by team members
- > Shared goals and vision



# Future education

- > Challenges and solutions
- > Workforce reform
- > A case for inter-professional education?

**Dinosaurs died out! Mammals did not!**



**Instead they embraced change and survived.**



## References

- > Cannon-Bowers 1995 Health Services Research
- > Choi CK and Anita WP 2006 *Clin Invest Med* 29 6 p351-364
- > McIntyre and Salas 1995 Health Services Research
- > Nolan M Towards an ethos of interdisciplinary practice *Br med J* 1995 312 305-7
- > Whitfield K Assumptions, ambiguities and possibilities in interdisciplinary health research *Can J Public Health* 2004 95 434-6
- > Woodruff G & McGonigal M 1988 Early Intervention Team Approaches Reston Virginia Council for Exceptional Children



# **Government of South Australia**

---

SA Health