If early literacy is the end where do we start?

Engaging and mobilising entire communities in support of early literacy.

Dr Amanda Howard

Social Work @uon

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

If early literacy is the end where to we start?

- Where are we now?

- How does that help and hinder us?

- What are our assumptions?

- Where are we starting from?

Framing early literacy

- Where do we usually start the conversation?

- Where does that lead us as a starting point?

- When does the problem solving frame work best?

- When does problem solving become a problem?

- Information, analysis,

- Problem solving, strategy, planning.

- When there's a solvable problem eg. Kids accessing books.

- When what you are working on is not a solvable problem but an array of interconnected factors.

Why do we love problem solving?

- Action oriented
- Certainty
- Clear and logical processes.
- Beginnings and endings
- Measurement
- Expertise

- Works well for organisations – structure, processes, accountability.
- Clear roles and responsibilities.
- Program orientation
- Perception of recourse efficiency

What works well for engaging organisations?
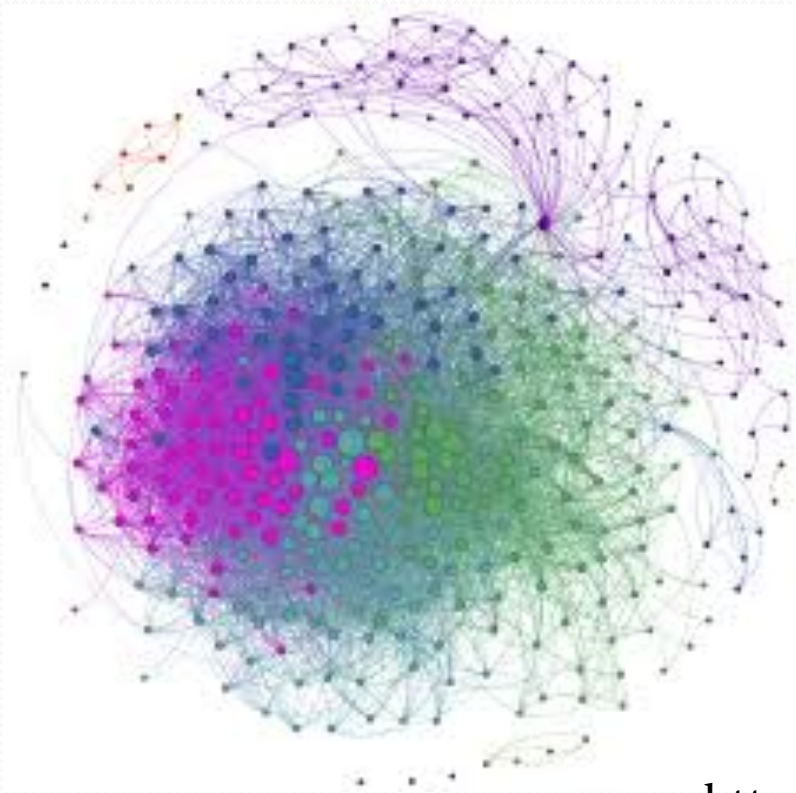

CEO

Management

Frontline workers

Problem solving

Organisations and Programs

Families

Community members

What works well for engaging communities?

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg

- Stop seeing the nail:
  - Listening/watching for strengths in individuals, families, groups communities.
  - Working with relationships between people.
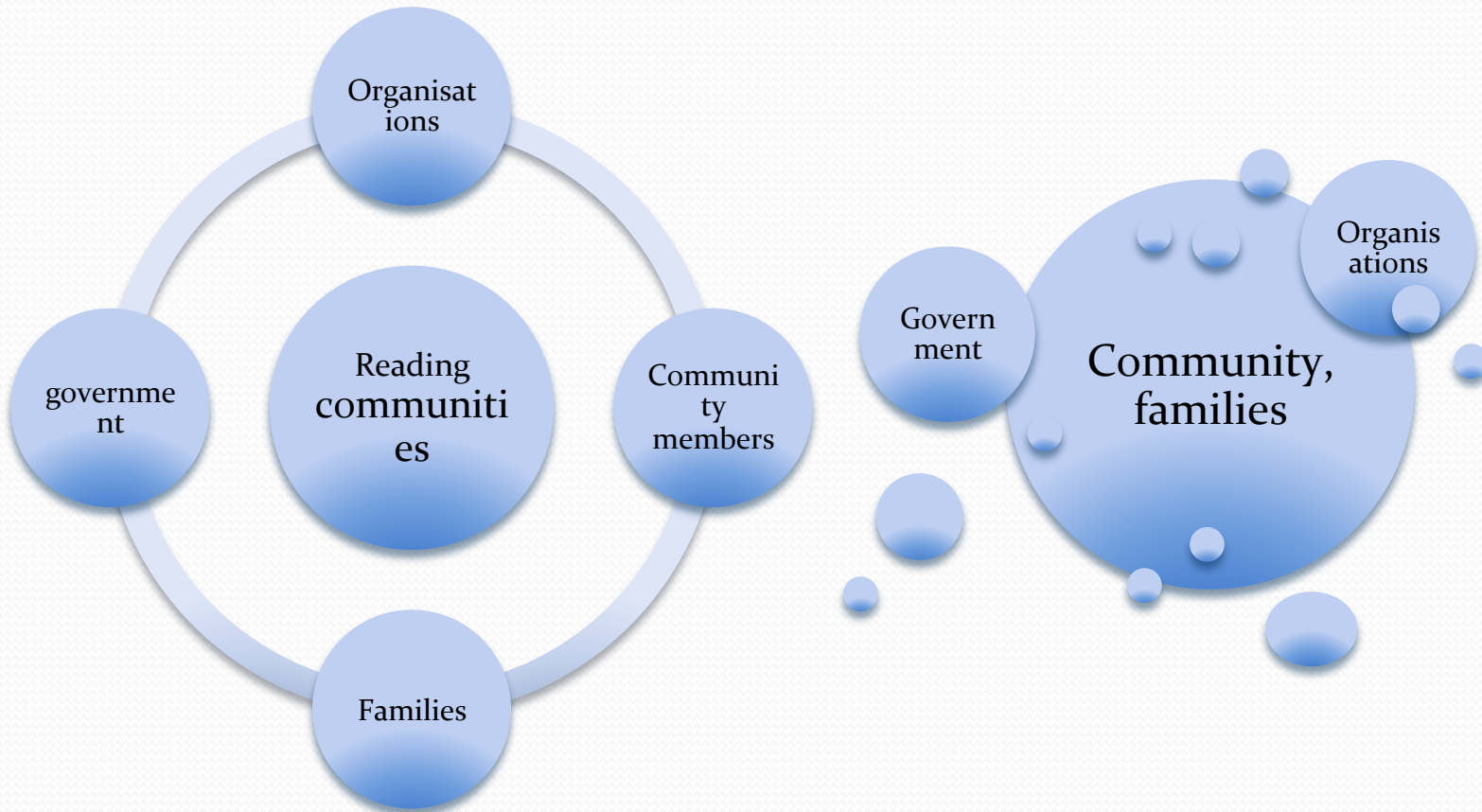 - Connecting and encouraging connection between people.

Understanding community networks

http://social-dynamics.org/tag/network-visualization/

Working with Strengths
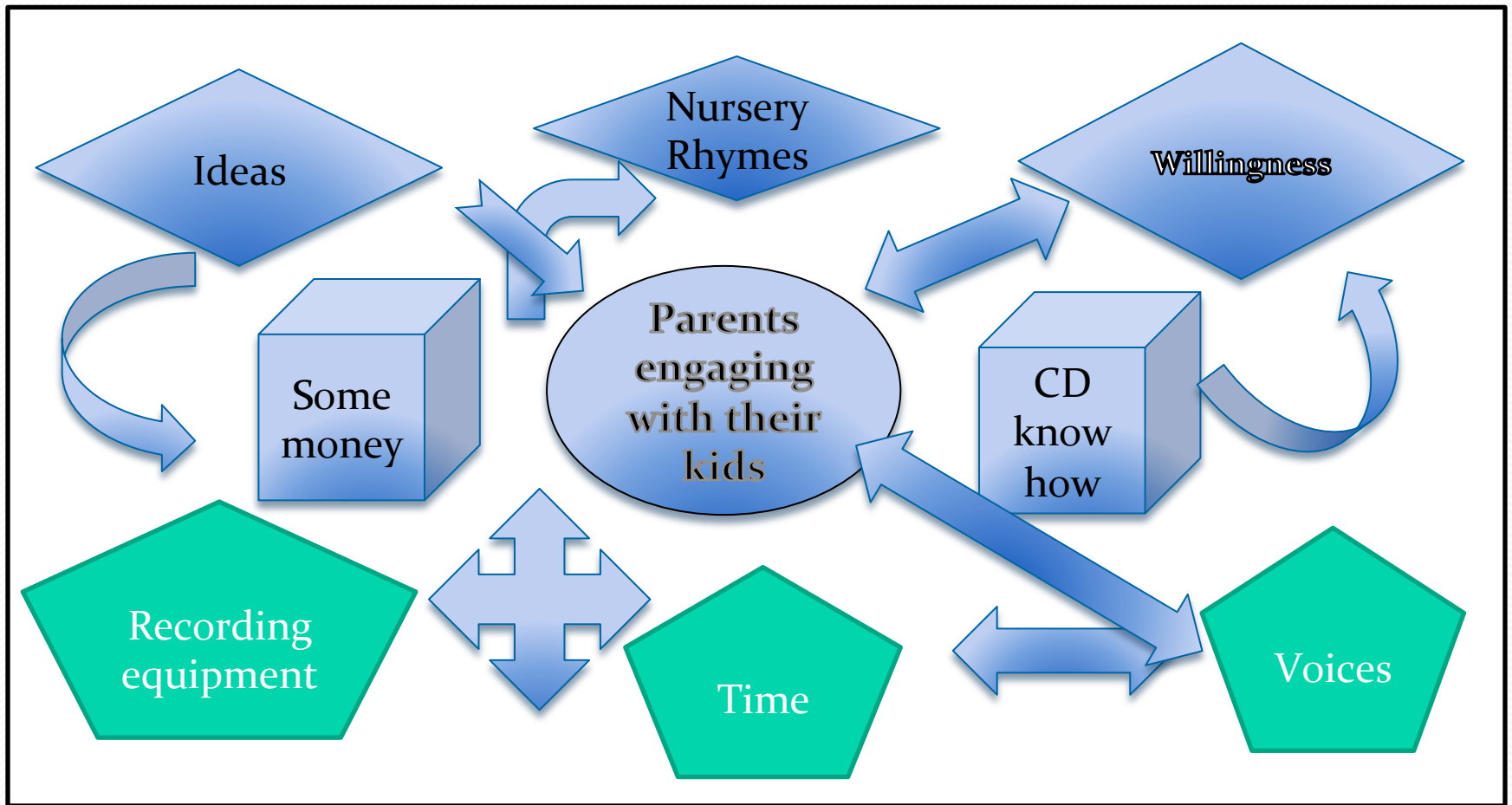
Different parts of the network

Organisations

- Stability and reliability
- Resources
- Legitimacy and authority
- Professional knowledge
- Positional power
- Formal networks and processes

Communities

- Relationships and fluid networks
- Unique perspectives and voices
- Talents, skills
- Local knowledge
- Freedom to innovate
- Participatory power

Bringing up kids, it's the little things that matter CD

Ideas

Nursery Rhymes

Willingness

Some money

Parents engaging with their kids

CD know how

Recording equipment

Time

Voices

Top tips

Listening

Observing
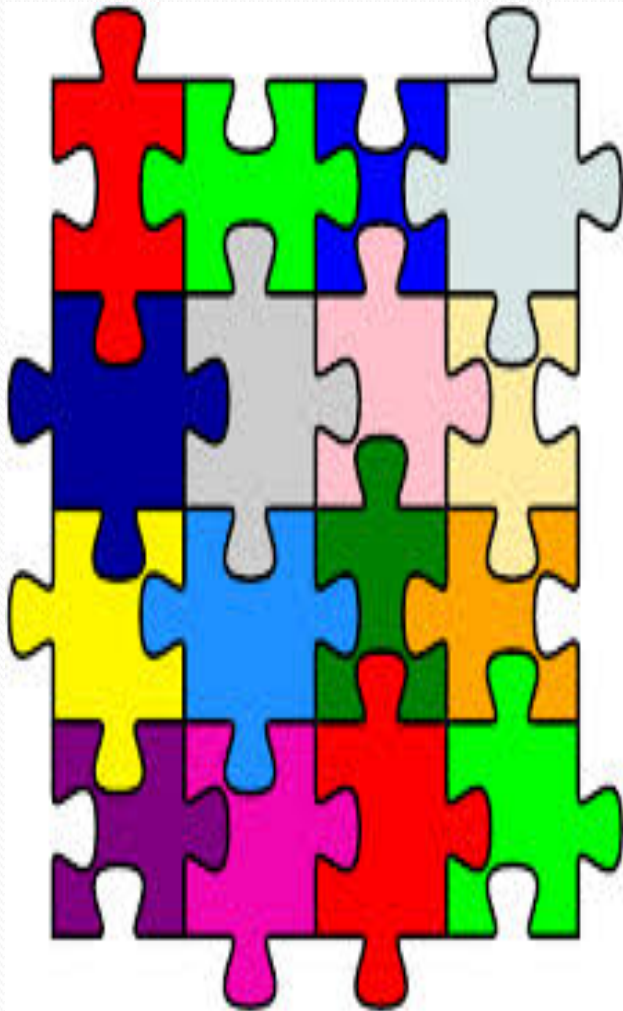
Connecting

Subverting

Making space

Questions

Sharing power

Stepping back

- Watch out for answers
- Programs and community engagement.
- Outcomes need processes and the right process matters
- Connections between strengths are what works.
- As a worker you have to be prepared to hold the organisations at bay.

- Next steps for organisations

- Next step for families

- Next steps for communities

- For a longer conversation……

Contact details

Dr Amanda Howard

Program Convener and Head of Discipline

Social Work Program

School of Humanities and Social Science

University of Newcastle

Ph. 0418863723

Amanda.Howard@newcastle.edu.au