



**Year I CAISE Landscape
Study**

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Project Goals

- Determine the current state of the ISE community and the degree to which it functions as an effective multidisciplinary CoP.
- Provide the background knowledge necessary to support decision-making that would help CAISE leadership determine how best to leverage their finite resources in support of the ISE community.



Theoretical Framework

- *Community of Practice* – a construct which describes the processes of social learning that occurs when people who have common goals interact while working to accomplish those goals.
- Deviated from traditional participation framework (*peripheral to active to core*). Adopted continuum ***ancillary*** to ***central***.



Methods

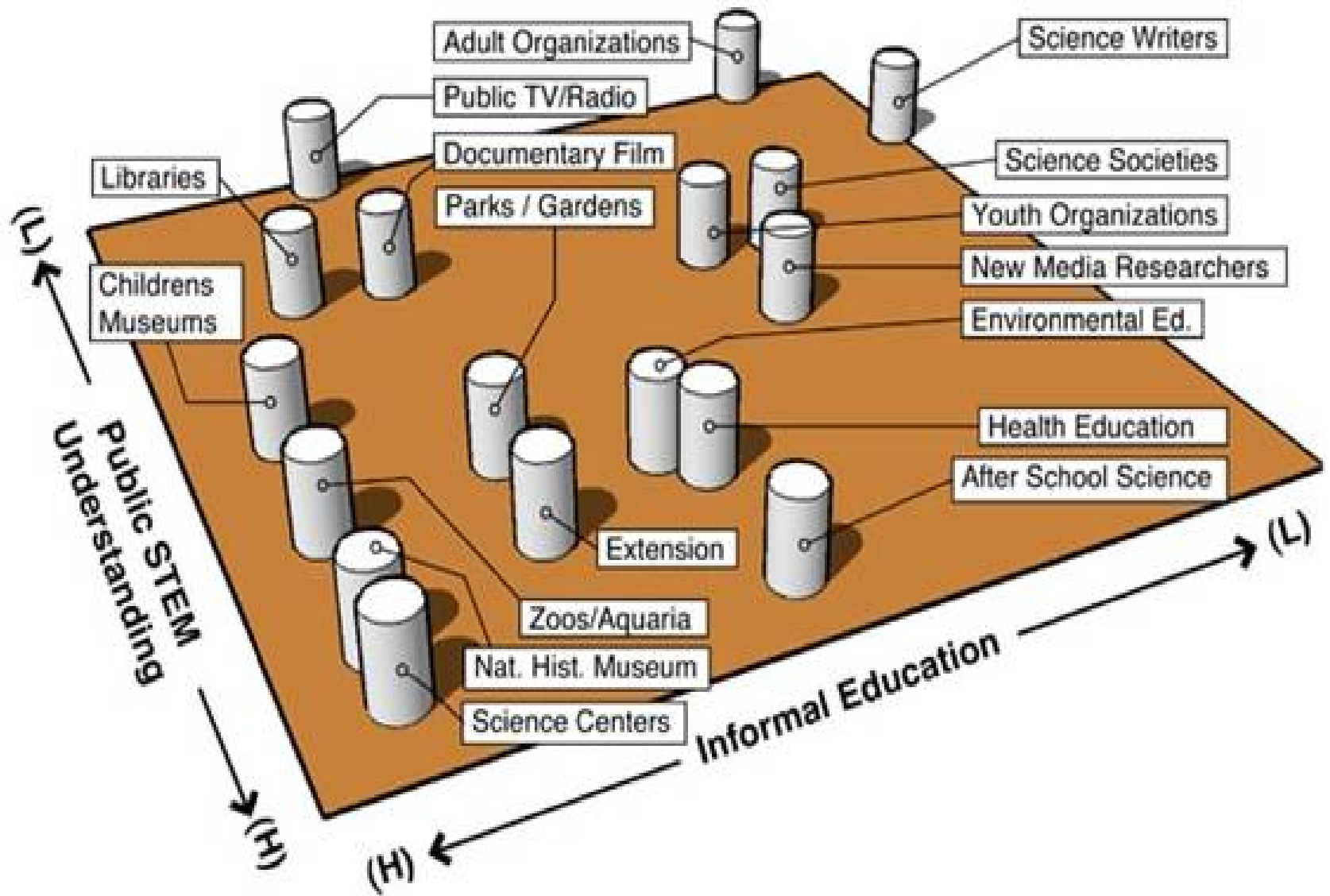
- Exploratory, Qualitative, Telephone Interviews
- Included high-level representatives from:
 - Youth Community Organizations
 - Adult Community Organizations
 - Science Centers
 - Botanical Gardens
 - Natural History Museums
 - Zoos and Aquariums
 - Environmental Organizations
 - Public Television and Radio
 - Science Writers
 - Health Organizations,
 - After-School Science
 - Science Societies
 - Large Format Film
 - Extension
 - Children’s Museums
 - Libraries
 - New Media Researchers



Results

- Unprompted, respondents only self-identified with their own communities, informal science education not mentioned.
- Prompted, overwhelming majority said their communities were part of the broader informal science education community.

Results





Results

Four striking and important similarities emerged:

- There was considerable agreement in the importance of promoting public STEM understanding and literacy.
- There was widespread convergence around the value of free-choice learning and commitment to the practice of informal education.
- By and large each sub-community seeks funding from the same pool of resources.
- Each sub-community uses very similar evidence and arguments for making the case for the value of what they do.



Conclusions

- Currently the ISE community does NOT function as an effective Community of Practice.
- However, many of the pieces that are necessary for ISE to become a true Community of Practice are currently in place.



Conclusions

Overall, results provided support for the immediate value of an entity like CAISE. Almost unanimously, research participants perceived one or more roles that an organization like CAISE could play to support their community in its work, in particular, CAISE could:

- Improve communication within and across the ISE field.
- Champion the importance of informal science education.

Why isn't ISE Already a Community of Practice?

- *Explanation One* : No historical, sustained need to become a Community called Informal Science Education; needs can be met using existing networks and models of social interaction.
- *Explanation Two*: Existing sub-communities have not coalesced into a robust Community because of a lack of an overarching vision that enables pieces to see significant value in becoming such a Community; if sub-communities saw such a vision they would become a larger Community of Practice.