

Developing Students' Skills FOR Trans-Disciplinary Communication Exploratory Project

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Purpose:

This exploratory project is part of a program to identify what may be feasible in the context of supporting education that includes the intellectual development of students in the skills of transdisciplinary communication, which has two etymological senses: communication **across and beyond disciplines**. The first sense is important for solving real-life problems that are multidisciplinary, in nature, and the second is necessary for professional life to communicate as effectively as possible with clients, end-users, patients, etc. In both cases, it is necessary to acquire the skills, proficiency, or aptitude to translate between disciplinary and transdisciplinary languages (or semiotic systems).

Like any sports or musical skill, the development of intellectual skills, such as this one, requires practice, and the more repetitive, the better. To achieve this, it is necessary to take the first steps, and that is what this exploratory project is about, attempting to identify the feasibility of something important and, in some cases, even necessary.

As an exploratory project, the objective is to identify whether the desirable is feasible and/or how it could be made feasible. This requires Action-Learning on the part of its promoters. That is why the project will have a dynamic of Design-Redesign, in the context of 'Action-Design'. Another objective is to try to maximize the number of disciplines that may participate in this exploratory project.

Implementation

The first increment in its implementation will be with the following options for the student:

Option A: The student (advised by a professor) chooses a necessarily transdisciplinary concept, notion, or topic and submits it for approval by the Organizing Committee of an IIS conference. If approved, the student submits an abstract (200-400 words) written in FOR transdisciplinary Communication. Upon approval of the abstract, the approval will be for a) a virtual presentation at the conference, or b) a virtual presentation and publication of an article based on the approved abstract. In the second case, a professor must be a co-author of the student.

Option B: The student selects an article already published by one of her/his professors and rewrites it in a transdisciplinary manner, referencing the original work. The same procedure as Option A will be followed thereafter. The title of the original publication may be changed to make it more transdisciplinary.

Publications:

If the virtual presentation is based on the acceptance of an abstract, the abstract will be published in the conference *abstract proceedings* and posted (published) at Academia.edu and ResearchGate. If the virtual presentation is based on a full article, it will be published in the conference proceedings, which have been indexed by SCOPUS since 2005, provided that the final version is received at least 5 weeks before the first day of the conference. Otherwise, it will be published in the journal, which has been indexed by DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) since 2003.

The additional requirements for publications will be the same as we have had since 2006 for participants who have paid their registration fees. **BUT, *Those participating in this exploratory project will not have to make the respective payments for the conference registration fee or abstract/article processing fee (for Article Processing Cost: APC)*** as this exploratory project is being supported by volunteers who strongly believe in its importance.

APPENDIX A

Anticipating Potential Questions to the Exploratory Project Related to “Developing Students’ Skills FOR Trans-Disciplinary Communication”

This appendix was inspired by important questions made by *Professors Alptekin Erkollar and Birgit Oberer*, Austria, ETCOP Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, and founding members of the International Association FOR Transdisciplinary Communication ([AFTC](#))

The Rigor of Transdisciplinary Communication:

After several interactions,¹ we concluded that the meaning of Rigor, in general (as applied to intellectual, sport, musical, religious, etc. domains) would be to *meet objectives subject to restrictions*, so The more objectives that are met and/or the more restrictions that constraining the activities to meet the objective(s), the higher the level of rigor. Consequently, in the context of a paper that has gone through peer review, acceptance, and publication, rewriting it for trans-disciplinary communication adds another objective: reaching a broader audience. Translating the content from one semiotic system (intra- or inter-disciplinary) to another (trans-disciplinary) introduces additional constraints and challenges. This process requires careful consideration of how to effectively communicate ideas and concepts to individuals from diverse backgrounds and disciplines.

Evaluation Criteria for a Paper Written FOR Transdisciplinary Communication:

A necessary and sine qua-non condition in the evaluation of an article written FOR Transdisciplinary Communication is to be legible and comprehensible by an academic of any academic discipline and better if it is legible and comprehensible by Society at Large. The latter is because the etymological meaning of Transdisciplinary Communication is ‘*across*’ and ‘*beyond*’ disciplines.

By making the article legible and comprehensible to a broader audience, it increases the potential for wider dissemination and impact. It allows non-experts to engage with the research, fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, and encourages the application of knowledge in practical contexts. This inclusiveness and openness to different audiences are fundamental aspects of transdisciplinary communication. It is important to remember that the publication of a paper should not be considered a final point but a *starting one for the dissemination* of the results of any research. This dissemination may not be recommendable to leave it in the hands of the publisher especially because the publisher may have other objectives that may not be related to the dissemination of the article, let alone to its *trans-disciplinary dissemination*.

¹ (Callaos & Marlowe, Interdisciplinary Communication Rigor, 2020); (Callaos, The Notion of Intellectual Rigor: A Systemic/Cybernetic Approach, 2020)

Evaluation Criteria for an Article Not Previously Published

- ***Besides, the above criteria***, an article that has not been previously peer-reviewed, should also be evaluated by its content and not just by its transdisciplinary expressive form, in which case, the peer-reviewing methodology of David Kaplan (How to Fix Peer Review, 2005) should ***necessarily*** be applied, as a minimum.
- ***For articles on transdisciplinary concepts, notions, or topics written FOR Transdisciplinary Communication***:
 - Verify that the content does not apply to just one disciplinary or interdisciplinary field but to all, or most, disciplines.
 - Estimate of the form in which it has been written is legible and comprehensible by any academic from any disciplinary or inter-disciplinary field.

Evaluative Criteria Necessary for the Above Three Sections or Cases:

Conceptual or notional integration, which requires internal coherence and congruence with the article's title and abstract as well as with the explicit objectives of the presentations and/or the publication expressed by the respective editors. This is necessary for any written communication and not just in transdisciplinary communication.

Differences to Consider While Evaluating an Article Written FOR Transdisciplinary Communication

- Transdisciplinary Approach and Transdisciplinarity are different notions as compared with the notion of Transdisciplinary Communication, mainly for two reasons:
 - intra- and inter-disciplinary research articles may be written, or re-written, FOR Transdisciplinary Communication
 - Frequently Transdisciplinary Approach and Transdisciplinarity articles are not written FOR Transdisciplinary Communication, but certainly may be written for FOR Transdisciplinary Communication

The above indicates that it is not necessary to evaluate the author(s) of an article written FOR Transdisciplinary Communication to the extent to which they have successfully integrated multiple disciplinary perspectives, theories, and methods into their work. The work may have been generated by intra-disciplinary research but it has been written FOR Transdisciplinary Communication

Additional Suggested Evaluative Means to be Considered

- **Potential Impact:** This is strongly related to the extent of the dissemination effect of the article written for FOR Transdisciplinary Communication in the academic community and/or in society at large (The two etymological senses of the prefix “trans-”
- **Originality and/or Novelty:** Assessing originality and novelty in transdisciplinary communication when translating an already published intra-disciplinary article may be challenging. Since the original work was already published within a specific intra- or inter-disciplinary context, especially because it may have already demonstrated novelty within that domain. *But, when translating it for transdisciplinary communication, the focus shifts* to assessing its originality and novelty concerning the new objectives and restriction, i.e., to what increases the rigor of the article. This is strongly related to the legibility and comprehensibility of the article to a larger audience or readership and with more restrictions, due to the transdisciplinary semiotic system. Consequently:
 - **The originality** is related to the new audience: it is an original work for the additional readership. Consequently, the originality of the work should be from this perspective., by examining the relevance, integration of perspectives, synthesis of ideas, and potential impact, you can determine the originality of the article within the transdisciplinary domain. All of this is **more important, and even necessary** when potential stakeholders of the initial research and publication are being taken into account and the originality is judged from their perspective
 - **The Novelty:** is a consequence of the requirement related to the legibility and comprehensibility of the article by academics in any disciplinary, inter-, or trans-disciplinary field. This is why it is strongly suggested to the editors to require as a necessary condition for the author to have a beta-reader of the article before its submission and to include in the acknowledgment section name, potential title, and affiliation of the beta reader of the article. For the same reason that an author cannot be her/his own proofreader, s/he cannot be her/his own beta reader. This is why it gets evident the novelty of the article because of the **new** academics and potentially non-academic audience or readership reached by the transdisciplinary version of the previous article.
- Potential to foster future transdisciplinary communications and/or collaborations.

Requirements for Publication of Full Articles

The requirements for publication of full articles in the conference proceedings that will be sent to SCOPUS for their indexation are to include in the Acknowledgement Section (the last one and right before the references) with names, titles, affiliation (or previous affiliation) of the following reviewers:

1. At least, one **CONTENT Non-Anonymous Reviewer**; according to David Kaplan’s methodology (Kaplan, 2005)

2. A **Beta-Reader**, as FORM reviewer. For trans-disciplinary publication, the beta reader should be one from a discipline far from the discipline of the author or, better, someone from Society at Large.
3. A **Print-Editor**, because it is the author's responsibility according to almost all kinds of publications and because no author may be an effective print editor of her/his own work, for the same reason why s/he cannot be her/his own proofreader because mistyping may not be detected by the same writer.

Works Cited

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