

IASH Workshop

Competencies for Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research and Learning: Enhancing Communication and Training the Next Generation

Saturday, 17 September 2011, 9:30 to 13:00 | Place: Hallerstrasse 12, room 002

With presentations by

09:30-10:30 *Julie Thompson Klein*, Wayne State University



“The Digital Turn in Humanities“

10:30-11:30 *Willi Haas and Barbara Smetschka*, Alpen Adria University Vienna



“Teaching transdisciplinarity: Evaluating competencies as part of a continuous learning process for both teachers and students“

11:30-12:30 *Veronica Boix Mansilla*, Harvard University



“Constructing 'Success' in Interdisciplinary Collaborations:
When Cognition, Emotion, and Interaction Matter at Once“



Chair: *Manuela Rossini*, University of Bern



Dan Stokols, University of California at Irvine

Abstracts

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Enrolment

Please enrol with Manuela Rossini, either leaving your name at the registration desk of the td-conference (University Main Building, 14-16 September) or by sending an email to: rossini@iash.unibe.ch

ABSTRACTS

Julie Thompson Klein, Professor of Humanities, Wayne State University; Fall 2011: Mellon Fellow and Visiting Professor in Digital Humanities, Institute for the Humanities, University of Michigan

The Digital Turn in Humanities

Digital Humanities is a rapidly growing field at the intersections of computing and the disciplines of humanities and arts; the professions of education and of library and information science; and interdisciplinary fields of media, communications, and cultural studies. The field arose in the late 1940s, in computational linguistics. Since then, it has expanded to include electronic text production, digital archives and library collections, cyberculture studies, digital-born art, large-scale data mining, gaming studies, and critical digital studies ... to name but a few examples. Drawing on her forthcoming book on *Mapping Digital Humanities*, in the University of Michigan Press series *Digital Humanities@digitalculturebooks*, Professor Klein will sketch the parameters of this growing field by tracking major patterns of definitions and historical developments. She will also reflect on implications for the competencies needed in research, teaching, and learning in the 21st century.

Barbara Smetschka and Willi Haas, Institute of Social Ecology Vienna SEC, Alpen Adria University

Teaching transdisciplinarity: Evaluating competencies as part of a continuous learning process for both teachers and students

Transdisciplinary research requires a wide range of competencies. They reach from disciplinary knowledge to the understanding of other disciplines to experience with expertise and non-scientific forms of knowledge and not least to some sort of knowing about designing processes and enhancing communication amongst diverse partners. Albeit there is no agreement upon an exhaustive list of competencies, we know about the grandness of this demand.

During many years of teaching we developed certain teaching modules to promote the development of students' competencies. Each of them is tailor made to fit challenges in the different phases of transdisciplinary projects. However, we have little knowledge on the learning success they can achieve. Therefore we developed several tools for evaluating at least the short-term learning. Amongst them are several feedback loops during the learning processes, written group essays that give insights in what has been understood and a competence questionnaire at the beginning and the end of the semester. In this paper we want to show our methods for evaluating learning success in transdisciplinary courses and discuss possibilities to further our knowledge on transdisciplinary teaching: Only if we learn, the students learn.

Veronica Boix-Mansilla, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Constructing 'Success' in Interdisciplinary Collaborations: When Cognition, Emotion, and Interaction Matter at Once

With few exceptions, available theories concerning interdisciplinary collaborations tend to focus heavily on either cognitive, social, or institutional dimension of such interchange. Drawing on an empirical study of nine established interdisciplinary research networks, this presentation examines how collaborators construe notions of success (or lack thereof) and the conditions that enable or impede their joint accomplishments.

A theoretical construct "shared socio-emotional-cognitive (SSEC) platforms" is advanced to capture markers of successful interdisciplinary collaboration and the conditions that enable them. The talk elaborates on this theoretical concept illustrating it with examples from our data. Three key dimensions of SSEC platforms will be described addressing the theoretical assumptions and empirical grounding on which they stand. Dimensions include: the cognitive-intellectual (most exclusively concerned with the representations of objects and epistemologies); the emotional (concerned with affective connection to individuals, ideas and academic self); and the social-interactional (concerned primarily with interaction, meaning-making, and group styles). The presentation concludes with an examination of implications of the SSEC platforms construct to understand the kinds of competencies we may need to nurture among researchers, teachers and students committed to successful collaborative interdisciplinary research.