

## Integration within universities

Universities are increasingly sets of disparate activities within the same organisation, marked by separate epistemic cultures. As such, the university is poorly placed not only in addressing world issues that call for cross-disciplinary efforts but also in understanding the totality of the Earth, with its intermingling of social and natural entities.

The matter of interdisciplinarity (and multidisciplinary) has been heard for 70 years but most efforts to establish it in universities have foundered.

Increasingly, now, transdisciplinarity is being called for. This requires large meta-themes that link the social and natural worlds. The aim is to match epistemology to ontology.

The question is HOW?

**My proposal:** that each university identify for itself a select few such large themes/ issues/ problems that call for the knowledge resources of the university to come together:

- Curricula and research projects and external projects would need to state to which transdisciplinary theme they are addressed and which knowledge resources of the university they are drawing on.
- A person's transdisciplinary activities would be an important consideration in internal promotions.
- The university would state and project the transdisciplinary themes/ issues that it was especially addressing in all of its branding and self-promotion actions.
- Faculties, departments, and research centres, in internal review exercises would be required to identify the transdisciplinary themes that they were especially addressing and demonstrate those claims with examples.

## Collaboration across universities

**Proposal:** That each programme of study should identify a comparable programme of study in another university and links be formed. Especially using the internet, students should be expected to:

- Get to know each other
- Engage in joint webinars
- Engage in joint projects
- Examine being a student in the other country
- Take the opportunity to enquire into the societal setting of the course in question - eg, in civil engineering, to explore the role of the civil engineer in the other country
- Work on joint assignments for assessment purposes
- Engage on difficult/ controversial issues perhaps with a moral aspect, relevant to the course in question, so as to bring out different value orientations in the two societies.

Once this format has been established between programmes of study in European universities, then the experience gained should be used as a platform to mount comparable kinds of collaboration with programmes of study in the Global South/ in lower and middle income countries.