

TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH: MOVING FORWARD

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1. Introduction

The *International Journal of Transdisciplinary Research (IJTR)* addresses the connection between economics and both the natural sciences and the liberal arts. This intersection will need to be strengthened today and in the future to answer the looming issues on the horizon. Issues such as sustainability, energy, global warming, globalization, economic development, and income inequality are very likely to worsen or become vitally important in the future. Society is firmly entrenched within the environment as matter, energy, and information are all exchanged in the economic system.

IJTR is not intended to be an economics journal, per se, as transdisciplinary research of any field is encouraged for submission. However, the editors felt that a coalescing field of study was needed to give *IJTR* some structure. Economics was chosen as the discipline to unify these issues because the economy, in one way or another, affects or is affected by the outcomes of other disciplines. It is well known, for example, that the economy affects the environment and natural resources. The literature examining the ecological, psychological/behavioral, chemical, and thermodynamic implications of economic change is vast. As such, I will not reexamine that literature here.

One may wonder why the disciplines from the humanities are included. These fields of study have much to offer. There are many insights that can be gained from management, philosophy, sociology, and law to develop processes for analyzing and managing the complex problem of sustainability (Meppem and Gill, 1998). For instance, history provides an excellent opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the past in order to create better decisions and policies. Even literature and music have a contribution to make as stories and songs of past problems and solutions are used to pass on wisdom from one generation to the next. Also, the roots of transdisciplinarity extend back to some of history's greatest philosophers and sociologists. There is no reason to believe that these fields do not have a contribution to make. Therefore, a decision was made to keep *IJTR* open as far as field of study is concerned.

2. A Different Approach

The largest difference that *IJTR* has to offer is the approach taken to solve or discuss problems and issues. The journal is interested in different approaches or application from all disciplines to better understand what is going on in our surroundings. Many, if not all, of the traditional approaches, as well as many heterodox tactics, fail to answer the most pressing issues plaguing the world. As our surroundings vary, there is a need for flexibility and adaptability so human behavior can be altered using elements from all disciplines. A new approach and a redefinition of values are needed. *IJTR* aims to foster new methods, models, and paradigms by allowing these issues and research from all disciplines to be published and debated in an open forum. *IJTR* is a place for bridges to be formed between all the disciplines to develop these new ideas.

Furthermore, in order to develop a more thorough understanding and for new approaches to be formed, a deeper analysis of the theoretical methods currently used are needed to continue to take it apart. It is no longer acceptable to stand outside the wall shouting that these models and approaches do not work, do not account for environmental concerns, etc. Important research has been performed showing the theoretical faults of those traditional models and the editors do not want to diminish that work. However, much more needs to be done on a theoretical and mathematical level to accomplish this task. Unfortunately, this research has difficulty finding a place to be published – *IJTR* welcomes these papers. Once the theoretical underpinnings are shown mathematically to be faulty and the mistakes from the past are understood, then perhaps the new approaches and models presented in *IJTR* will become the mainstream.

3. Why *IJTR*?

The name *IJTR* was chosen for specific reasons. First, the journal is “International” because today’s problems affect everyone in the world and it will take the international community to solve these problems. Certainly, no single country has a monopoly in new approaches or intellectual thought. Therefore, it is one of the goals of this journal to involve a large cross-section of authors from around the globe. We believe that this is an important aspect of *IJTR*. As such, a rather large effort was made to include many of the top scholars conducting research in the transdisciplinary arena on the editorial board.

“Transdisciplinary” was chosen because the word implies a collection of knowledge into one place. Transdisciplinarity examines issues between disciplines, across disciplines, and beyond all disciplines to develop an understanding of the world (Nicolescu, 2001). With this as a foundation the journal was developed. Only from a transdisciplinary viewpoint can the problems encompassing humanity be sufficiently addressed. A true decision-maker must be able to communicate with all the disciplines at once (Nicolescu, 1999). The challenge is to obtain a solution that simultaneously processes a number of views around a central point while developing a hypothesis with cognitive claims useful to transform theory and extend applications (Hayes and Lynne, 2004).

4. Conclusion

Our world today is full of instability, transition, and nonlinearities. There will not always be a transition to a stable steady-state as the traditional approaches claim. Therefore, new paradigms and tools are necessary to understand, explain, and learn how behavior shapes the dynamics of the world. To accomplish this task, disciplinary barriers must be destroyed and new ways for solving problems, through the transfer of knowledge from one discipline to another will emerge.

The goal of *IJTR* is to foster new analytical methods and models by rejecting a strict adherence to an ideology or paradigm. *IJTR*, in many ways, is enabling a revolution whose goal is to overturn conventional ideas of logic, epistemology, and everyday life as a result of technological advancements. The large discrepancy between the new vision (transdisciplinarity)—which is emerging in all disciplines from studying natural systems, the values of neoclassical economics, and the life of modern society—of the complex world must be recognized (Nicolescu, 1987). Transdisciplinarity accounts for the consequences of a flow of information flowing between the various disciplines, permitting the emergence of unity amidst the diversity and diversity through the unity (Nicolescu, 1987). Our hope is that *IJTR* will play an important role in understanding and reshaping our world by eliminating the division of information that currently exists among the disciplines by becoming an unifying force.

References

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