

TRANSDISCIPLINARY CREATION OF A SHARED VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This contribution is about the creation of a shared vision for sustainable development among different stakeholder groups based on a transdisciplinary process. With respect to sustainable development inter- and transdisciplinarity become the main characteristics of processes needed for the creation of a shared vision. Further, this process is supported by an integrated model for creative problem solving, the so called “Planetary Model” [4]. We further argue how the transdisciplinary case study approach addresses the integration of research and teaching, and as a consequence, enables mutual and collaborative learning experiences to evolve. Therefore effective communication tools such as a meta-model of language, a goal model, systemic constellation and the market of competences are needed.

Sustainable development of a system like an organization or a region is a highly complex problem and requires appropriate procedures, which may differ considerably to those used in traditional, single disciplinary approaches. With the traditional single disciplinary approach it is not possible to capture the complex nature of sustainability problems and to define a sound vision for sustainable development. A very promising approach enabling joint development of a shared vision is provided by the concept of transdisciplinary case studies for sustainable development, established by Scholz at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich as a means of higher education [3]. Such case studies allow, existing conventional structures and processes to be broken down by establishing a close cooperation between academics and practitioners. In other words, the main characteristics of this concept are its inter- and transdisciplinarity, which lead to a mutual learning process among the various actors involved. Transdisciplinary case studies for sustainable development are not only mere research projects; they are rather a combination of academic research, teaching activities, and factual application in practice, where researchers also act as instructors and tutors of students. Students, researchers and practitioners work together closely in order to find an appropriate orientation in regard to the leading question of a case study, i.e. sustainable development of society within a certain system. From an educational point of view sustainable development is a process of communication [1][2]. It includes individual learning as well as group learning as a mutual process. Most of what is called mutual and self-regulated learning or implied social skills occurs in an informal process.

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