

The Importance of Transdisciplinarity in Education

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Abstract

In contemporary academe there are hostilities and tensions between disciplines that have different ontological, epistemological, and methodological systems. For example, disciplines that use quantitative methods believe their way of learning and knowing is superior to those who use qualitative methods and those who use qualitative methods blame quantitative methods for excluding diversity as “outliers.” In this paper I argue that these tensions are based in political, emotional, and ideological beliefs rather than logic, reason, and science. The future pursuit of knowledge is at risk of becoming stagnant because it continues to be exclusive to certain ideas. Keeping knowledge systems separate perpetuates status quo and the marginalization of certain groups. The resistance towards the synthesis of knowledge keeps a handful of disciplinary ideals at the forefront of power and this power is used to dictate to humanity, what they think knowledge, teaching, and learning should be. This denies many other knowledge systems a voice in learning, knowing, and contributing to research. Transdisciplinarity can be used to tear down the boundaries between disciplines and dissolved the barriers between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This paper will define Transdisciplinarity. What is it and how can it be applied as a method in education? Finally, I will suggest how transdisciplinarity can be used to break down the barriers between quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the favour of mixed methods.

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