

Institutionalizing transdisciplinary learning on different levels

Reaching the global vision developed through the SDGs by the year 2030 (DESA 2015) calls for cross-sectoral, transformation-oriented approaches in all areas of life (Nilsson et al. 2018). Education, as defined specifically in SDG 4, is key in terms of ensuring quality education for all, but also as a key enabler to make sustainable development a responsibility for society as a whole by fostering sustainability transformations in the context of social learning processes (Reed et al. 2010), real-world laboratories and experiments as learning and research settings (Singer-Brodowski et al. 2018), or change processes and capacity-building in administrations and other organizations (Keeler et al. 2019). Against the backdrop of connecting sustainability and learning, we differentiate between two dimensions of learning: (i) the area of societal interaction and (ii) the level of reflection informing learning processes. With (i) we argue that learning can happen individually, as well as through experience-based collaboration, and also through societal interaction (Barth et al. 2019). With (ii) we refer to the concept of single, double and triple loop learning (Argyris and Schön 1996). Triple-loop learning strives for new ways of thinking and it is very closely linked to transdisciplinary research with its idea of mutual learning between different scientific disciplines as well as between science and society.

At Leuphana University Lüneburg, we aim to address both dimensions in a variety of settings that we would like to introduce in the session: A teaching approach supporting sustainability learning for first-year students, a research center to facilitate cross-faculty research and learning, and a research project aiming to build a network and amplify such learning processes. Each case will be guided by a question for further discussion:

- i) The module “Transforming knowledge: responsible action” is compulsory for all first-year students and follows an interdisciplinary, research-based learning approach, informing the question: **How can we as a higher education institution embed the idea of transdisciplinary learning systematically into our curriculum?**
- ii) The Institute for Sustainable Development and Learning (ISDL) has been founded as a cross-faculty research center to research and support transdisciplinary learning processes for sustainable development in various research projects, putting the dimension of mutual learning between Global South and North at the core of the activities. Introducing the center’s approach, we can discuss: **How can we address the different dimensions of learning in our research?**
- iii) The project tdAcademy develops a platform to share insights on transdisciplinary research, offer capacity building formats, as well as provide a space for exchange, reflection, collaboration, and new ideas, thus informing the question: **How can we build capacities on transdisciplinary learning and ensure mutual learning across institutions and countries?**

During and after the presentation, we would like to engage the audience in conversation about experiences, approaches, needs, potential challenges and coping strategies regarding our questions and transdisciplinary learning in general.

Literature

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