

From multi- to trans-disciplinary research

Some concepts

Lisa Sella (P)

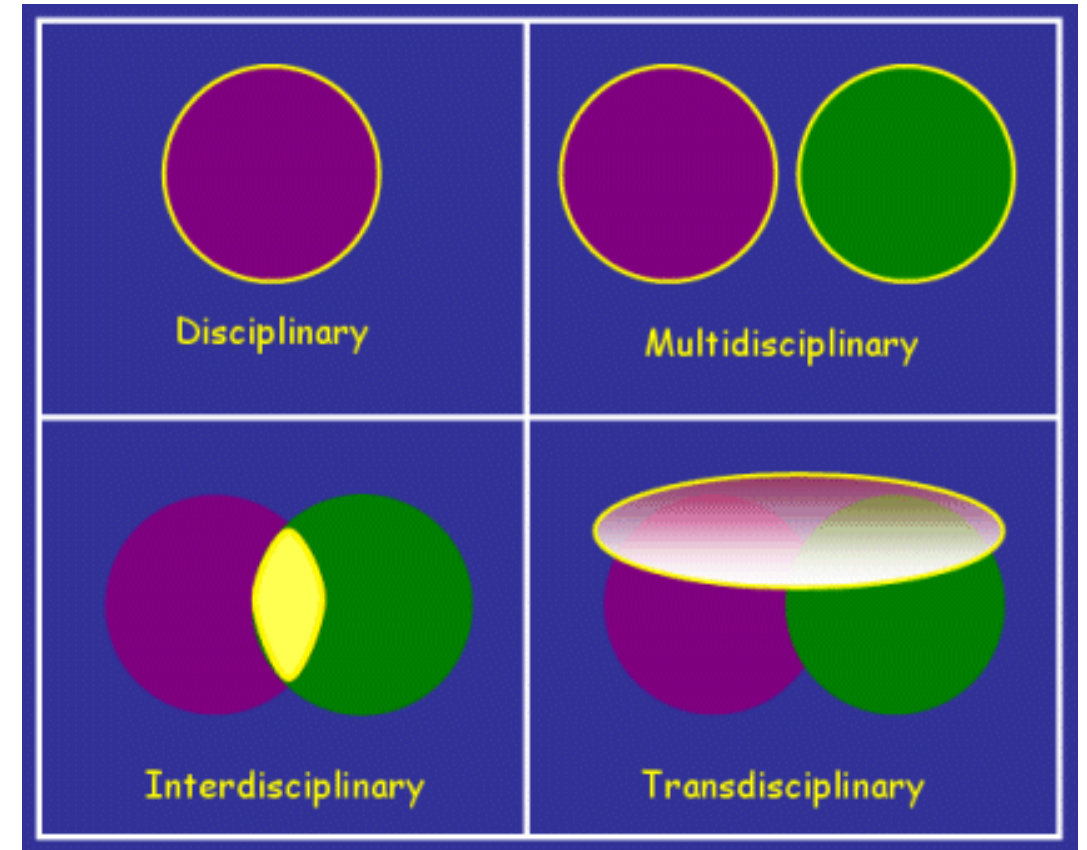
Session
Interdisciplinary research for complex questions
Chair: E. Ragazzi

MOTIVATION OF THE SESSION

- “We live in a **complex world** and at a challenging time” (US President Obama, July 16th 2014): many **socio-economic challenges**, including OSH
- *Polymakers need considerable knowledge from several disciplines and the capacity to integrate them into a holistic framework*
- Need for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches: breaking down the methodological and epistemological boundaries (Stock and Burton, 2011)
- **OSH studies** deal with complex real-world challenges that need the integration of knowledge and understanding on many social issues: are we developing **genuine interdisciplinarity**?

MULTI-/INTER-/TRANS-DISCIPLINARITY

- **Disciplinary:** Epistemologies, assumptions, knowledge, skills, methods **within** the boundary of a discipline
- **Multidisciplinary:** Using the knowledge/understanding of **more than one** discipline
- **Interdisciplinary:** Using the epistemologies/methods of one discipline **within** another
- **Transdisciplinary:** Focus on an issue both **within and beyond** discipline boundaries with the possibility of new perspectives in **collaboration with stakeholders/society**



(Source) Holistic Education Network:
<http://www.hent.org/transdisciplinary.htm>

CHALLENGES OF INTER-DISCIPLINARITY

- **Shared terminology** and lexical understanding (François, 2006; Bracken and Oughton, 2006)
- Multi-disciplinarity does not imply inter-/trans- disciplinarity: researchers tend to collaborate exclusively **inside their disciplinary boundaries** (Li Vigni, 2020)
- Interdisciplinarity is seldom the researchers' main aim: rather, it is a **tool** to fulfil a given research objective
- Some **preconditions**: intellectual curiosity, collaborative and open attitude, propensity to establish new relationships, researchers' friendship and trust (MacMynowski, 2007; Buller, 2009)
- **Lack of** (Stock and Burton, 2011):
 - Training in integrated research
 - Academic recognition of interdisciplinary research
 - High-level journals to publish in
 - A college of peers to discuss the research approach itself

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Thanks for your attention

Presenter: Lisa Sella lisa.sella@ircres.cnr.it