2026 INSciTS and ITD Alliance Virtual Seminar Series

Philosophical Perspectives on Inter- and Transdisciplinarity: Pluralism, Reflexivity, and Critique

Thursday, January 22, 2026
9:00am (PST), 12:00noon (EST), 6:00pm (CET)

INSciTS | Advancing Team Science for Real World Impact

International Network for the Science of Team Science

ITD Alliance

Global Alliance for Inter- and Transdisciplinarity

Why an ITD Alliance and INSciTS 2026 Seminar Series?

- Partnering to host a webinar series in the spirit of both organizations interests in pursuing a deeper understanding of complex collaborations across different disciplines

What are the goals?

- Provide our communities the opportunity to engage with new and exciting areas of research and scholarship and identify shared areas of interest

Can we do more?

- Yes! More will be held in the coming months
- If you have a seminar idea, please email sfiore@ucf.edu

INSciTS | Advancing Team Science for Real World Impact
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ITD Alliance
Global Alliance for Inter- and Transdisciplinarity

- International Network for Science of Team Science (INSciTS)
  - Support understanding and improving scientific teamwork (https://www.inscits.org)
  - Annual Science of Team Science Conference (SciTS26 next held May 6th to 9th, 2026 in Vancouver, British Columbia, CA)

- Global Alliance for Inter- and Transdisciplinarity
  - Strengthen global capacity for collaborative modes of boundary-crossing research (https://itd-alliance.org)
  - Semi-annual ITD Conference (ITD27 next held May 31st – June 4th, 2027 in Évora, Portugal)

Developing and disseminating a rich and robust scholarly literature on cross-disciplinary research at the individual and collaborative level to improve scientific and societal problem solving

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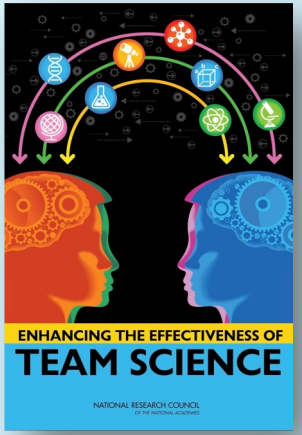
2015 Team Science Report

- Assembling teams
- Group dynamics in teams
- Supporting leadership development opportunities
- Virtual collaborations
- Study and measurement of science teams
- Promotion & Tenure in science teams
- Credit for team-based work



2024-2025 NASEM Study - Research and Application in Team Science

- Best practices, barriers, impacts, and the role of hybrid environments
- Improve understanding of best practices in team science
- Evaluate the growing role of virtual and hybrid teams
- Identify gaps in resources and training for team science; and
- Better understand how to measure the effectiveness of teams

Enhancing the Effectiveness of Team Science (2015) -- http://www.nap.edu/catalog/19007/enhancing-the-effectiveness-of-team-science
Research and Application in Team Science (2025) - https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/research-and-application-in-team-science

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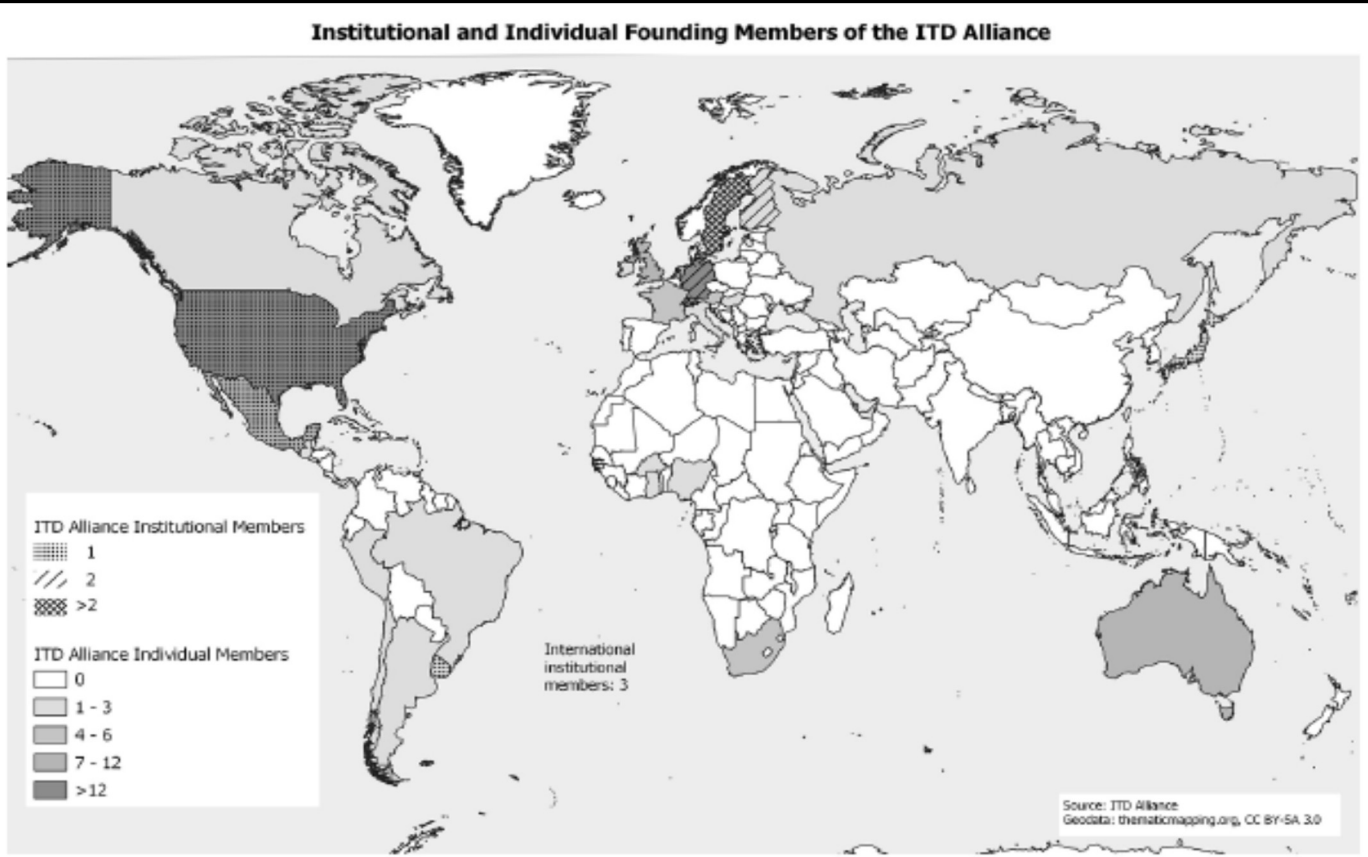

Fiore, S.M., Klein, J.T., Vilsmaier, U., Keestra, M., Paulsen, T. (2023). Global alliance for inter- and transdisciplinarity: Connecting organizations to advance collaborative research and education. In R.J. Lawrence (Ed.), *Handbook of Transdisciplinarity: Global Perspectives*. (pp. 525-535). Edward Elgar Publishing.

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Philosophical Perspectives on Inter- and Transdisciplinarity: Pluralism, Reflexivity, and Critique

Panelist: Dr. Bethany Laursen, Team Science Specialist, Michigan Institute for Clinical and Health Research, University of Michigan

Panelist: Machiel Keestra, Central Diversity Officer, Assistant Professor, Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Amsterdam

Panelist: Dr. Jan Cornelius Schmidt, Professor of Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Applied Sciences, Darmstadt, Germany

Moderator: Stephen M. Fiore, Pegasus Professor of Cognitive Sciences, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL USA

- Stephen M. Fiore
  - Welcome and Introduction to Series (~ 5m)
- Machiel Keestra & Jan Cornelius Schmidt
  - Overview of Special Issue (~ 5m)
- Jan Cornelius Schmidt
  - Philosophical Framework for Inter- and Transdisciplinarity: Facilitating and Deepening Critical Reflectivity (~ 5m)
  - Brief Q&A on Paper (~ 2m)
- Bethany Laursen
  - Integrative Topologies: Customizable Models for Crossdisciplinary Knowledge Integration (~ 5m)
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  - Resisting the Imperative of Integration: Epistemic Injustice, Resistance and Openness in Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research (~ 5m)
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To submit questions, please DM me using the private chat feature. To manage time, this will be how questions are asked to the panelists.

ISSUES IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

A Peer-Reviewed Publication of the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies

Volume 42 (1–2), Spring–Fall 2024

Editors

P. Sven Arvidson, Seattle University, USA, and Khadijah O. Miller, Norfolk State University, USA

Guest Editors

Machiel Keestra, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; Jan Cornelius Schmidt, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences / European University of Technology, Germany

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Pluralism, Reflexivity and Critique: Introduction to the Special Issue on Philosophy of Interdisciplinarity 1

Machiel Keestra, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; Jan Cornelius Schmidt, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences / European University of Technology, Germany

Pluralism, Reflexivity and Critique:

Introduction to the Special Issue on Philosophy of Interdisciplinarity

Machiel Keestra (U Amsterdam) &
Jan Cornelius Schmidt (Darmstadt UAS / European University of Technology EUT+)

INSciTS and ITDA Webinar, January 22, 2026

100 years of interdisciplinarity – with modest philosophical engagement

US Social Sciences Research Council contends it is: “charged with the duty of considering where the best chances were for coordinated or interdisciplinary work.” (SSRC, 1926, p. 445)

OECD Conference in Paris: Jantsch and others argue for ID als “self-renewal” (1972).

“In general, philosophers have remained reluctant to address ‘interdisciplinarity’.” (Hoffmann, Schmidt et al., Synthesis special issue 2013, p. 1858).

First monograph on ‘Philosophy of Interdisciplinarity’ only appeared in 2022

Philosophy's focus more on disciplinarity than on interdisciplinarity's pluralism

- Philosophers (of science) have traditionally focused more on (disciplinary) monism & unification of science
- Interdisciplinarity's pluralism also implies an anti-reductionist approach, in contrast to traditional scientific unification.
- Philosophy of interdisciplinarity should not just focus on ID as instrument or method, but instead "Philosophy of interdisciplinarity can be seen as a critical and reflexive as well as participatory and engaged form of research" (Keestra & Schmidt, Introd.).
- Our aim is to "advance a pluralist understanding of ID … which is interlaced with further elements such as critical-reflexivity and societal relevance, responsibility and accountability" and to "contribute to a kind of self-enlightenment of ID practices."

Outline of the Issues … Vol. 42, 2024

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AIS INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS 297

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300 pages in 11 articles, written by scholars representing 8 countries: Argentina, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Mexico, Netherlands, US, Uruguay.

h_da NEMBER OF EUT+ EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

SECTIONS I & 2

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III. Plurality and Normativity: Dealing with Normative Dimensions Explicitly

Inter- and transdisciplinary integration:

- typically focuses on epistemological and methodological dimensions.
- leads to more robust (under variable conditions) results compared to disciplinarity
- yet it acquires further *social* robustness by integrating normative and ethical dimensions.

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IV. Plurality by Valuing Diversity: Ethical, Social and Personal Dimensions

After WW II, growing attention to societal and ecological impact. Consequently projects increasingly:

- dedicate explicit attention to the normative dimensions of inter- and transdisciplinary research
- facilitate or even demand the inclusion of extra-academic stakeholders in scientific projects

Yet integration can fail when fundamental differences between worldviews and norms, presenting moral challenge to inter- and transdisciplinary researchers.

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Prospects of Philosophy of Interdisciplinarity

In the future, a (more) critical-reflexive approach could enrich ID/TD projects.
Philosophy of ID promotes and encourages a pluralistic mindset regarding …

1. concepts, notions and understandings of ID/TD
2. integration methods, heuristics, techniques, tools, management structures
3. normative engagements & reflections: “communicative action”
4. diversity & valuation of different approaches, perspectives, backgrounds

and thus contributes to ID/TD practices towards a more societally & sustainability relevant practice

Advancing a critical-reflexive mindset & attitude which encourages critique & reflexivity *in*, *of* & *for* ID

1. individual background
2. project’s background
3. political background
4. cultural and institutional background

Issues In Interdisciplinary Studies,
Vol. 42 (1–2), Spring–Fall 2024, pp. 21–48

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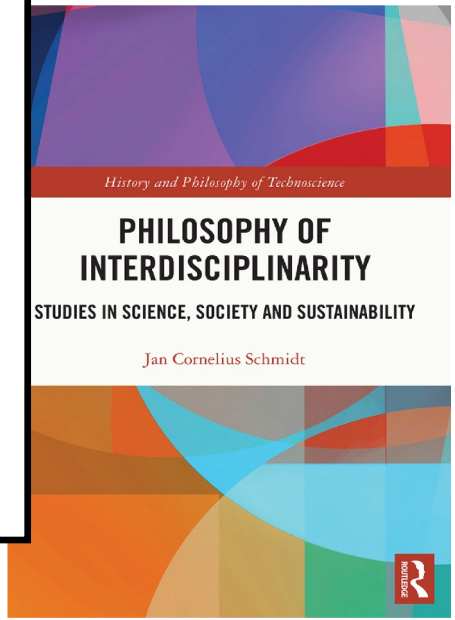
Philosophical Framework for Inter- and Transdisciplinarity: Facilitating and Deepening Critical Reflectivity

Jan Cornelius Schmidt
Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences /
European University of Technology, Germany



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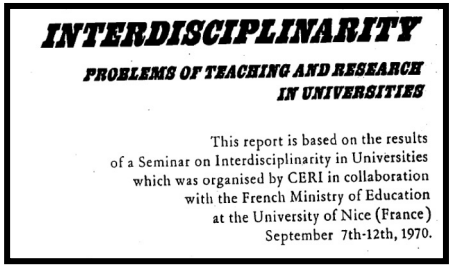
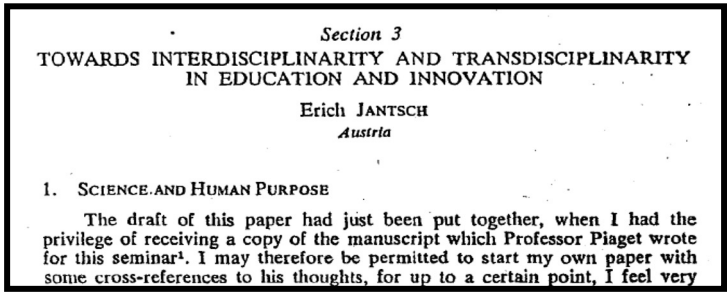
Aim and approach



INTERDISCIPLINARITY

PROBLEMS OF TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN UNIVERSITIES

This report is based on the results of a Seminar on Interdisciplinarity in Universities which was organised by CERI in collaboration with the French Ministry of Education at the University of Nice (France) September 7th-12th, 1970.



Section 3

TOWARDS INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY IN EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Erich JANTSCH

Austria

1. SCIENCE AND HUMAN PURPOSE

The draft of this paper had just been put together, when I had the privilege of receiving a copy of the manuscript which Professor Piaget wrote for this seminar[1]. I may therefore be permitted to start my own paper with some cross-references to his thoughts, for up to a certain point, I feel very

- ► My background: physics, philosophy, technology assessment
- ► Hype of the buzzwords & the practice of ID/TD
  - research & sci pol programs, conferences calls, …
  - presidential speeches, politicians, …
  - post-normal / -academic / trans- science, mode 2, ...
- ► Dominance of methods, management, recipes, steps:
  instrumentalist-solutionist orientation
  with technomorphic thinking ! ?
- ► But there is politicity: The notion of “ID” and “TD” is …
  … a normative-descriptive hybrid and eminently political: as in Jantsch’s “self-renewal”!
- ► Strengthening the critical-reflexive vs. instrumentalist-solutionist voices
- ► The aim is to enable differentiation …

Line of argumentation: Enabling differentiation

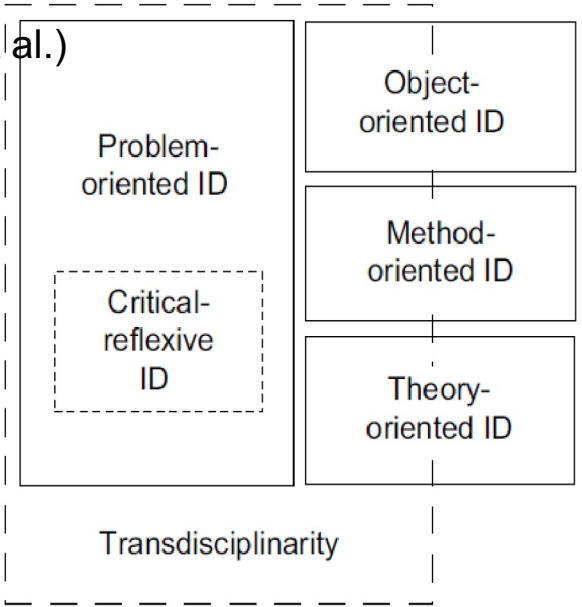
- Implicit assumptions on boundaries: separation & overcoming
  1. Boundary paradoxon: if overcoming would succeed, there is no ID/TD -> better: *boundary dialectics* (Hegel, Marx et al.)
  1. Keep boundaries! Boundary awareness & reflection

- Plurality: Complex boundary transgressing ….
  1. objects: object oriented ID
  2. theories / knowledge: theory oriented ID
  3. methods / heuristics: method oriented ID
  4. problems / issues: problem oriented ID (= TD?)

  … relevance of underlying philosophical traditions

- Problem oriented ID deserve more attention

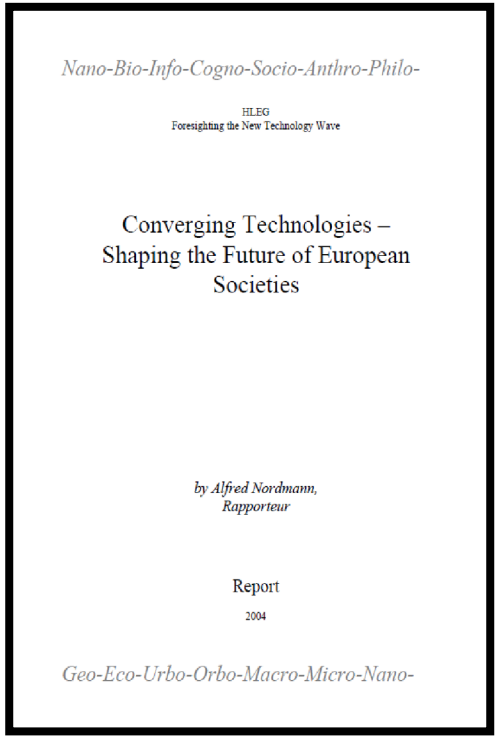
- Differentiation is the first step of critique: Between …
  1. … technoscience approaches & problem oriented ID
  2. … problem-oriented (instr.-solut.) & problem-oriented critical-reflexive ID



Case Studies: Two cultures of ID

NSF's NBIC-report: "Convergent technologies "require interdisciplinary integration". "The phrase 'convergent technologies' refers to the **synergistic combination** of four major 'NBIC' (*nano-bio-info-cogno*) provinces of science and technology." -> object-oriented ID

EU's Nordmann-report: "Converging technologies converge towards a **common goal** or **shared visions**. CTs [in Europe] always [should!] involve an element of **agenda-setting**. Because of this, converging technologies are particularly open to the deliberate inclusion of public and policy concerns." -> problem-oriented ID



Nano-Bio-Info-Cogno-Socio-Anthro-Philo-

HLEG
Foresighting the New Technology Wave

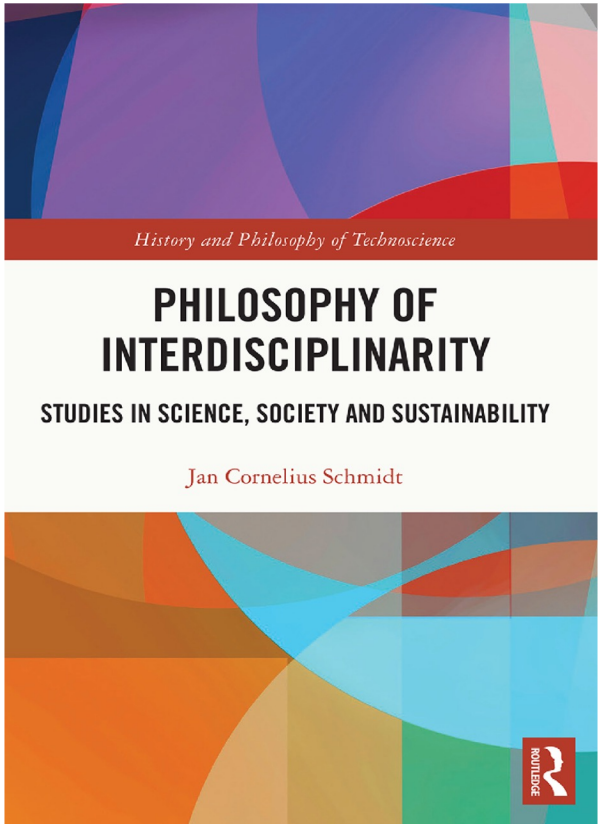
Converging Technologies – Shaping the Future of European Societies

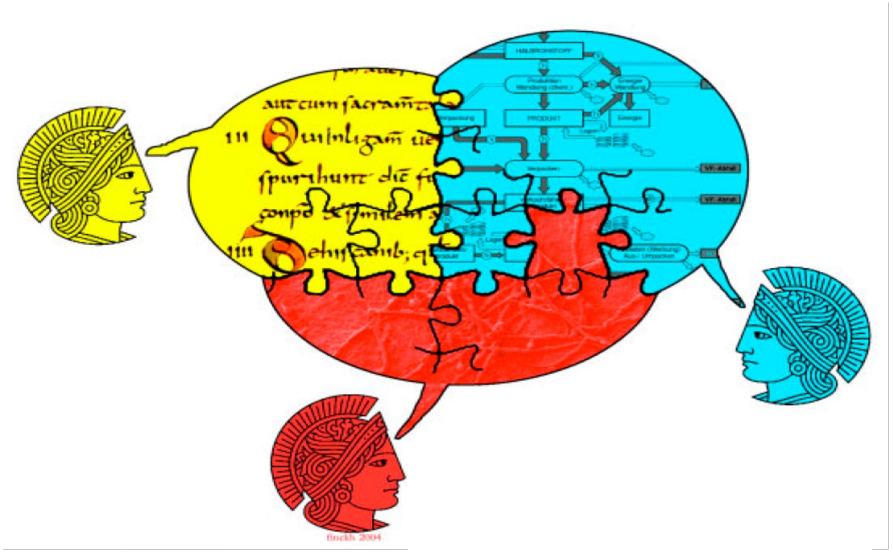
by Alfred Nordmann, Rapporteur

Report

2004

Geo-Eco-Urbo-Orbo-Macro-Micro-Nano-





Thank you for your attention !

jan.schmidt@h-da.de

Integrative Topologies

Customizable Models for Crossdisciplinary Knowledge Integration

Bethany Laursen, PhD, MA, MS

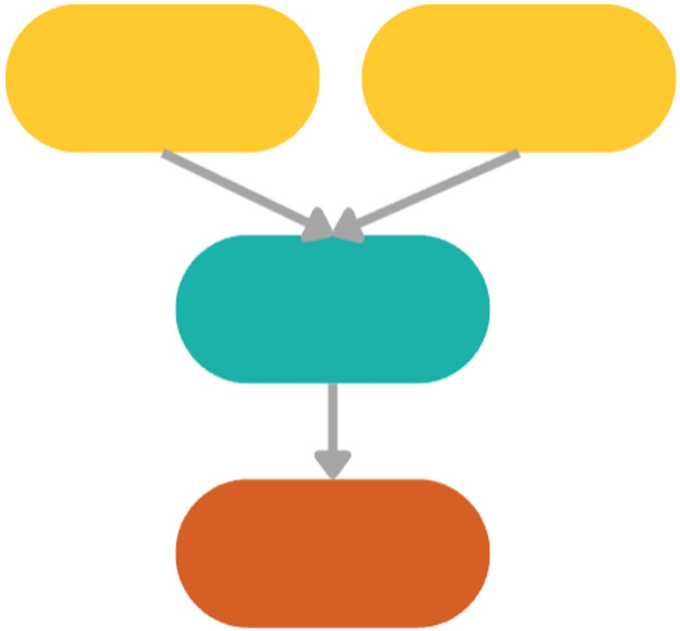
Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research

University of Michigan

1

Trying to solve a big problem?

When solving big problems, people often need to connect ideas from different sources, kind of like assembling parts in a factory. This is called “knowledge integration.”

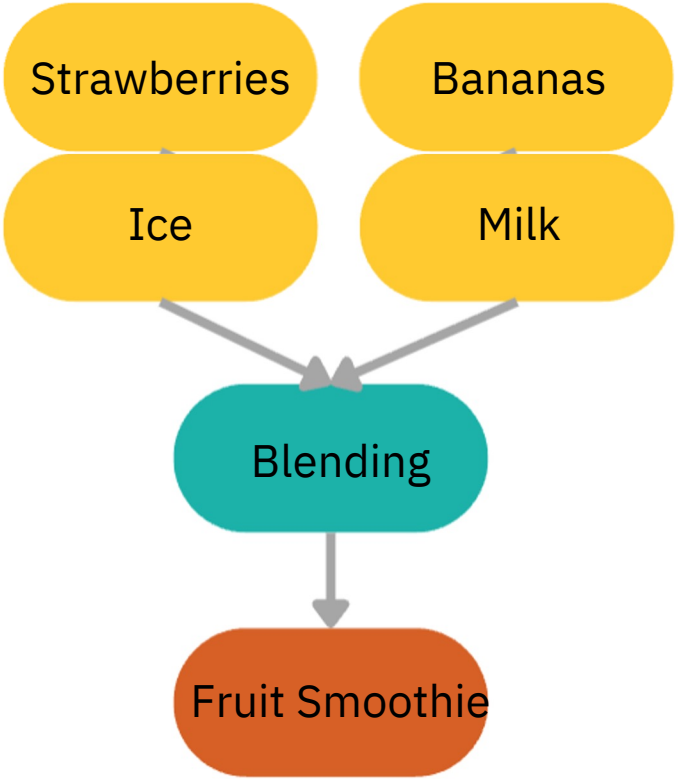


2

Integration is input-process-output (IPO)

Each integration is like a machine with 3 parts:

- inputs - the pieces
- process - how you connect the pieces
- outputs - the finished product



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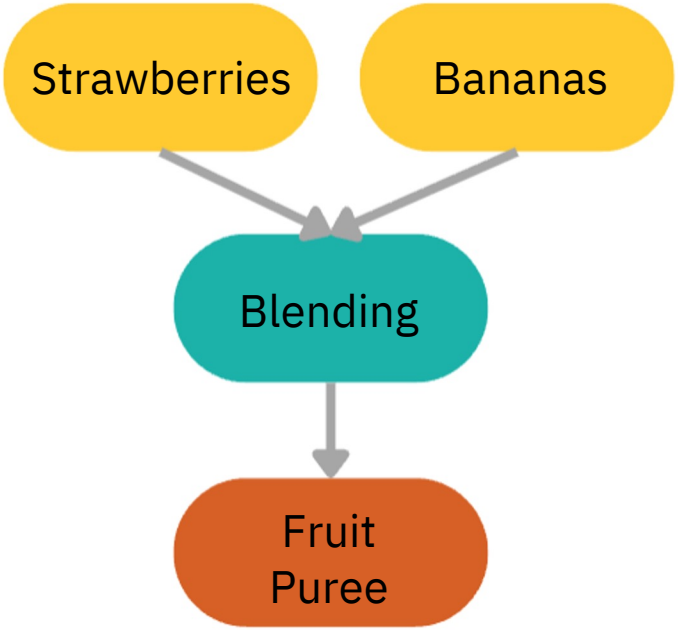

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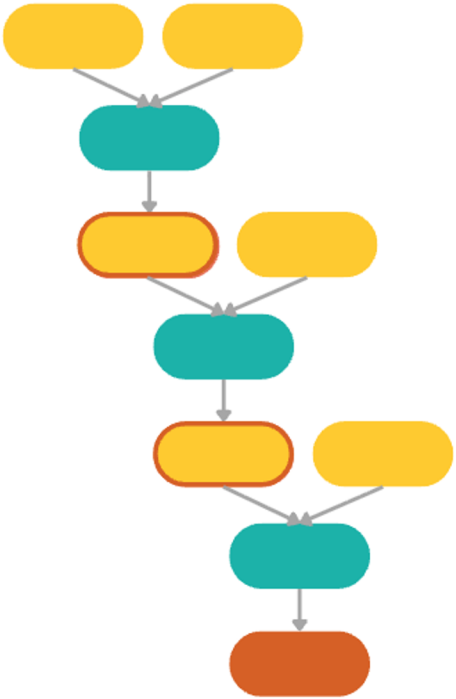
3

Link atomic integrations into pathways

Sometimes, like an assembly line, an output you create can become a new input for your next project or step, forming a path of connections called an “integrative pathway.”



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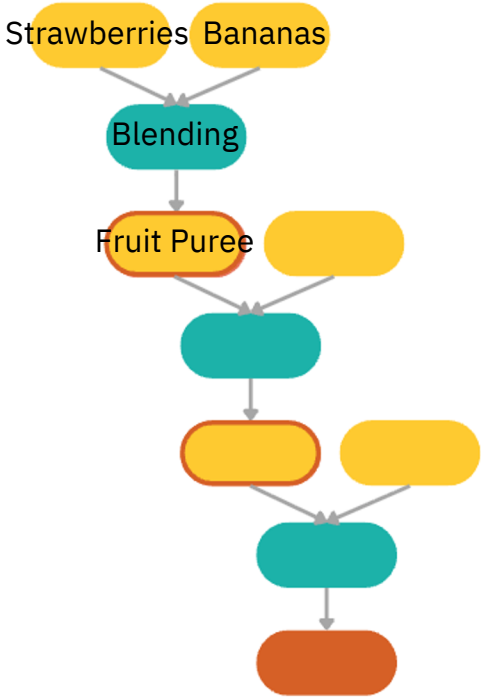

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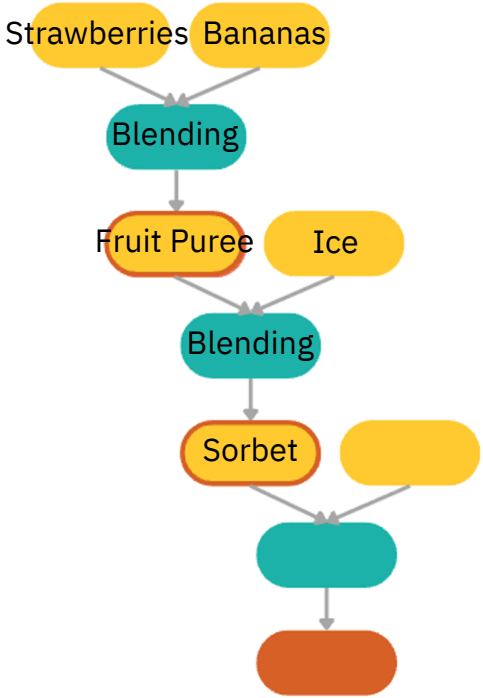

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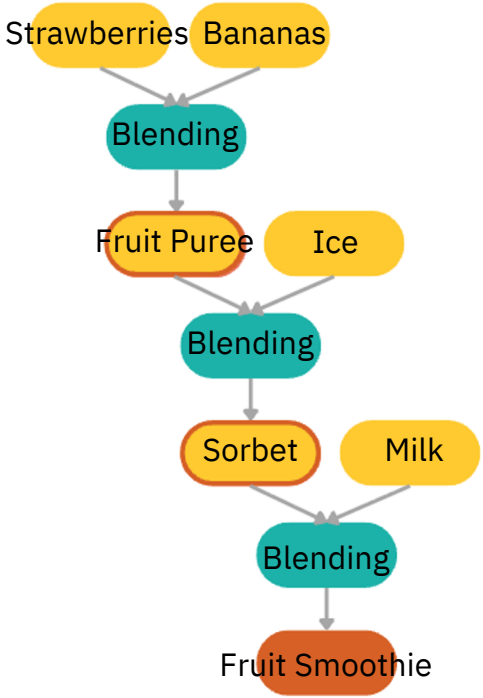
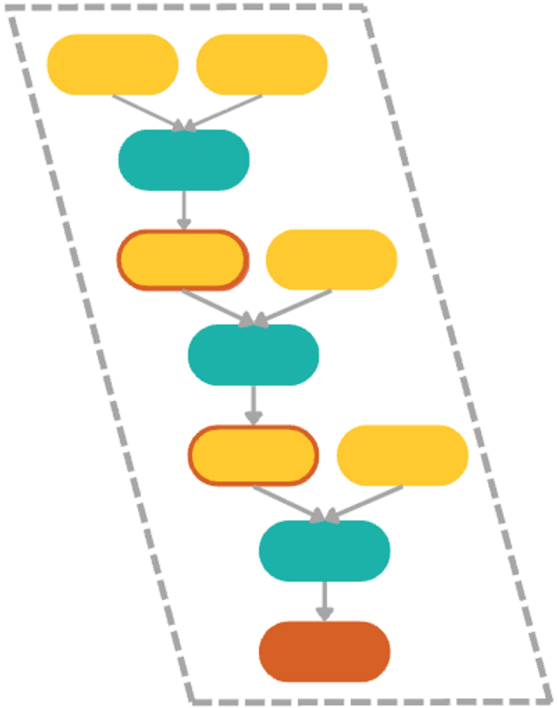
Link atomic integrations into pathways

Sometimes, like an assembly line, an output you create can become a new input for your next project or step, forming a path of connections called an “integrative pathway.”





4

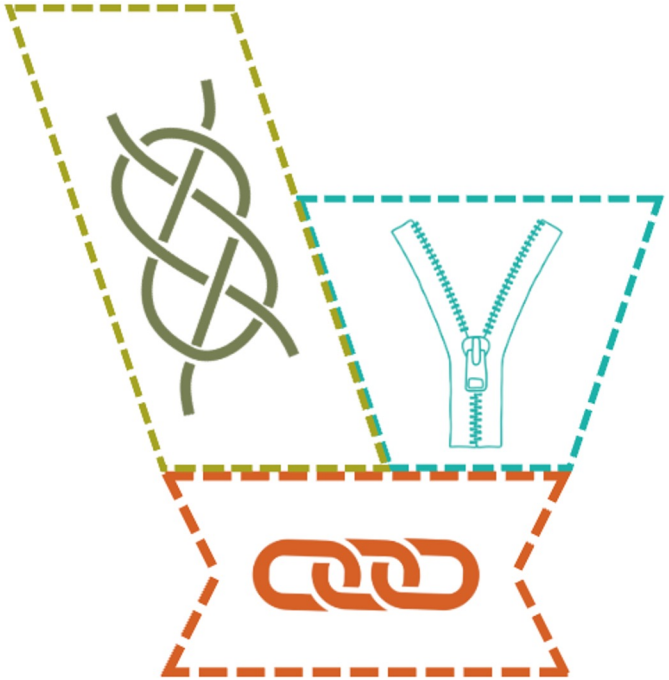
Integrative pathways have shapes

Just like assembly lines in different factories, integrative pathways have different shapes. These shapes are called “integrative topologies.”

5

Different shapes do different things

Example integrative topologies include weaves, zippers, and chains. You can even mix or stack these shapes like interwoven assembly lines, creating amazing solutions to big problems step by step.



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Resisting the Imperative of Integration: Epistemic Injustice, Resistance and Openness in Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research

(Keestra & Dieleman, Issues in IDS, pp. 42, 269-296)

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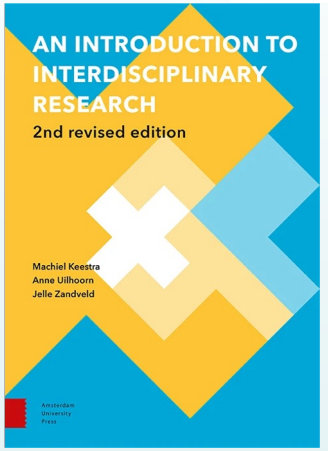
InSciTS-ITDA-Webinar, January 22, 2026
Article download via QR-code →

Background: Imperative of Integration



"Interdisciplinary research is a mode of research in which an individual scientist or a team of scientists integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge…." (Nat. Academies of Science, 2005; in Keestra e.a., Introduction to Interdisciplinary Research, AUP 2022)

Yet such ITD integration is challenged in 2 case studies, analyzed through lense of epistemic injustice & resistance.

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Resisting the Imperative of Integration: Epistemic Injustice, Resistance and Openness in Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research

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Epistemic injustice against epistemic subject

Specific forms in which knowledge and power interact, such that epistemic injustice arises:

"*a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower*." (Fricker 2017, p. 1; cf. 2003)

Epistemic injustice is concerned with *'forms of unfair treatment that relate to issues of knowledge, understanding, and participation in communicative practices'* (Kidd, 2017, p. 1)

Three forms of Epistemic Injustice

Epistemic injustice is a wrong that concerns a person or group in their capacity as ‘knower’, and knows several forms:

1. Testimonial injustice – devaluation of a person’s credibility due to prejudice and stereotype
2. Hermeneutical injustice – unfair disadvantage due to ‘a gap in collective interpretive resources’
3. Contributory/participatory injustice – preventing someone / group from contributing to or participating at all in the knowledge process

(Fricker 2007; Drożdżowicz, 2021/ Patin, 2021)

Epistemic resistance: from re-attention to rejection

Epistemic resistance entails the "use of our epistemic resources and abilities to undermine and change oppressive normative structures and the complacent cognitive-affective functioning that sustains those structures" (Medina, 2013, p. 3).

Spectrum of epistemic friction & resistance:

- refocusing attention, attending to alt. (re-)sources of info
- redefinition, recategorization, reframing, decentering
- genealogy, counter-narrative, dissonance, pluralism
- epistemic disobedience, alternative imaginations
- pointing out epistemic vices & injustices, biases
- silence, withdrawing from epistemic interactions

(cf. Keestra & Dieleman 'Resisting the Imperative of Integration: Epistemic Injustice, Resistance and Openness in Inter-and Transdisciplinary Research', in *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies, 42, Spring/Fall 2024*)

Example: *endogenous* epistemic resistance against epistemic injustice in Autism studies

Internal research criticism by autistic communities against:

- ❏ deficit/medical model of autism
- ❏ focus on cure & on biological causes
- ❏ no genuine participation

Plea for:

- ❏ social/difference model of autism
- ❏ neurodiverse approach
- ❏ focus on support and care
- ❏ ‘neurotypical epistemic humility’

(Pellicano 2014; McVey 2023; Rosqvist 2019; Chapman 2022)

Example: *exogenous* epistemic resistance in sustainability studies

External research criticism by indigenous communities against:

- ❏ ontological and epistemological (‘sentipensar’) assumptions
- ❏ concept of ‘sustainable development’, in contrast to ‘Buen Vivir’
- ❏ lack of respect for lived experience
- ❏ neo-colonialism

Plea for:

- ❏ valuing of indigenous thinking as equal to the thinking underlying SDG’s
- ❏ inter-cultural dialogue towards ‘inter-epistemic’ dialogue

Responses to Epistemic Injustice & Resistance?

Starting from epistemic humility & openness, Keestra & Dieleman propose:

- dialogue about power dynamics and the implicit assumptions towards mutual understanding

- joint imagination for developing ‘affective and embodied experiences of future possibilities’

(Cf. Keestra 2019, Imagination and Actionability: Reflections on the Future of Interdisciplinarity;
Dieleman 2012, Transdisciplinary Artful Doing in Spaces of Experimentation and Imagination.)

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Question and Answers

Philosophical Perspectives on Inter- and Transdisciplinarity:

Panelist: Dr. Bethany Laursen, Team Science Specialist, Michigan Institute for Clinical and Health Research, University of Michigan

Panelist: Machiel Keestra, Central Diversity Officer, Assistant Professor, Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Amsterdam

Panelist: Dr. Jan Cornelius Schmidt, Professor of Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Applied Sciences, Darmstadt, Germany

Moderator: Stephen M. Fiore, Pegasus Professor of Cognitive Sciences, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL USA