Chapter 2
Transdisciplinarity: The Dynamic Future of Exemplary Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Transdisciplinarity is the union among, between, and across all disciplines. Its aim is to promote a unity of knowledge and imagination that can be harnessed to solve problems in innovative and constructive ways. Transdisciplinarity fuels leadership as it is a powerful tool easily wielded to generate results through expanding available options; promoting reflexivity and inclusivity; cultivating new languages, vocabularies, and methods of communicating ideas; constructing state-of-the-art systems; and developing unconventional, composite knowledge bases. Through transdisciplinarity, problems that have long plagued individuals, organizations, and societies can be solved. Through transdisciplinarity, knowledge across disciplines is integrated and transformed into wisdom. Through transdisciplinarity, leaders can engage in the very important work of nurturing the minds, hearts, and spirits of those they lead and serve.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership, at its best, is transdisciplinarity in action. As both an art and a science, leadership is a phenomenon of the present with a lasting impact on the future. Leadership, at its best, inspires innovation and creativity, catalyzes committed action, and sources results while nurturing the human spirit. Leadership, at its best, demonstrates the power of synergistic disciplines. Transdisciplinarity enables leaders...
Transdisciplinarity aims to improve futures and to bring about much-needed solutions to persistent problems and challenges.

According to Northouse (2018), leadership is aimed at influencing followers through the action of communication in the aim of attaining particular goals. Bolman and Deal (2017) posit that leaders create visions of future states and bring them to reality through others. Transdisciplinarity, according to Klein and Macdonald (2002), fuels leadership as it is strongly oriented towards creating different prospects—futures generated by improving choices, heightening reflexivity and inclusivity, generating new languages, designing new structures, devising new pluralistic and more complex knowledge cultures.

Exemplary leaders embrace transdisciplinarity for themselves and build within their organizations a culture of transdisciplinarity. This orientation impacts workplaces and the results produced are often transformational. Knowing becomes understanding and generates new ways of being grounded in wisdom and higher consciousness (Klein, 2015). Also, transdisciplinarity is exponentially powerful when it is embraced as an ongoing approach or process, not as an end in itself but rather fuel for the future.

According to researcher and scholar Dr. Victor Wang (2019), transdisciplinarity in theory, research and practice refers to that which is done across the disciplines, between the disciplines, and beyond and outside all disciplines. The traditional methods of viewing the world through the scientific approach, instrumental knowledge, discipline specific paradigms do not adequately serve the needs of theory, research, and practice within an increasingly complex world. Through transdisciplinary theory, research and practice, we focus on a new form of learning and problem solving that meets the complex challenges of society at all levels. This gives credence to Albert Einstein’s view, “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For while knowledge defines all we currently know and understand, imagination points to all we might yet discover and create” (Kline, 2017).

Transdisciplinarity is an apparent phenomenon, which identifies a clear foundation of a new and much-needed way of carrying out different strategies. This goes beyond the dualism of conflicting ideas (Klein, 2017). In leadership, transdisciplinarity forms one of the basic rules that enables individuals