

PML

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Laboratory



Listen to the ocean

CoastWEB: Experiences from the interdisciplinary coalface

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@Coastwellbeing



Interdisciplinary Coalface?

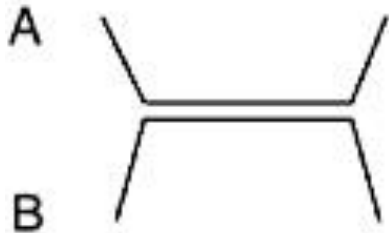


<https://rondon.wordpress.com/2012/06/04/stories-from-the-coal-face/>

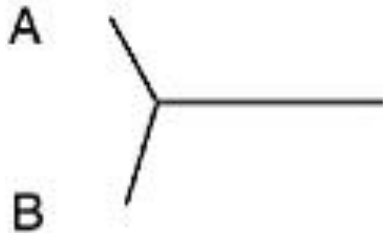
‘Doing the work involved in a job, in real working conditions, rather than planning or talking about it.’

Cambridge Dictionary

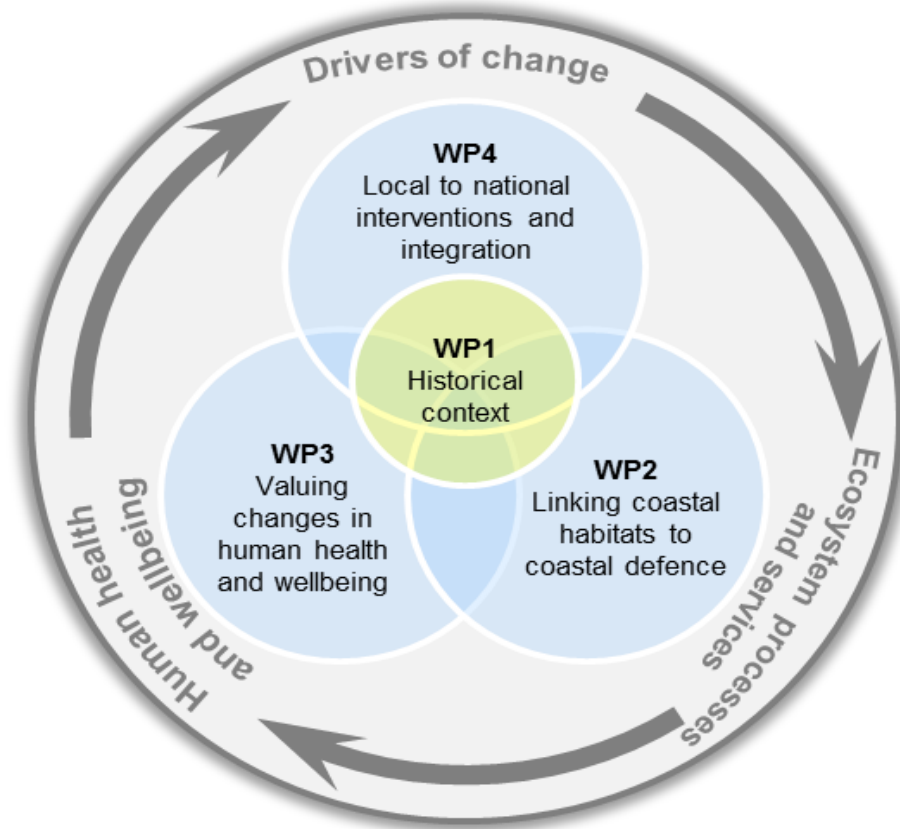
What is interdisciplinary?



A *Multidisciplinary:*
Join together to
work on common problem,
split apart unchanged
when work is done.



C *Interdisciplinary:*
Join together to
work on common question or problem.
Interaction may forge a new
research field or discipline.



Environmental science, environmental economics, environmental and social psychology, art, policy and governance.



The CoastWEB Team



Psychologist



Psychologist



Prifysgol Abertawe Swansea University



Modeller



PRIFYSGOL BANGOR UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Middlesex University London



The good

- “Interdisciplinary working is never boring or dull! But its benefits are great and many – inspiration, different ways of thinking and working, etc”
- “Fun, as it is really interesting and sometimes a great relief to learn of the approaches and concepts of other disciplines”
- “I have been involved in a series of interdisciplinary projects at the EU level and the outcomes have been very ‘lucrative’ in terms of ‘impact’ – i.e. the interdisciplinary seem to ‘breed’ linkage with stakeholders and update in the policy, planning, and commercial sectors...”

The bad

- “Frustrating, as sometimes language and different concepts can make progress slow and communication difficult”
- “The main difficulty for me is where there can be a fundamental misunderstanding of my role and skill set and this is where I am frequently expected to make difficult data accessible or act as an illustrator or designer.”
- “The assumption of what I can bring to the table can be rather simplistic. I think that my role in a project such as this is to shed a different light upon the study”

The challenges

- “Disciplinary language and habits, e.g. journal/conference styles”
- “The time frames, the way of working and the jargon are different”
- “the language and working method can initially prove a barrier to communication making it mutually problematic to establish a basis upon which collaboration can take place.”
- “You’re almost expected to identify with a ‘main’ discipline however interdisciplinary you are.”
- “Difficult to do any interdisciplinary work within the standard UK funding routes, still... Largely because peer-review is fraught with problems...”

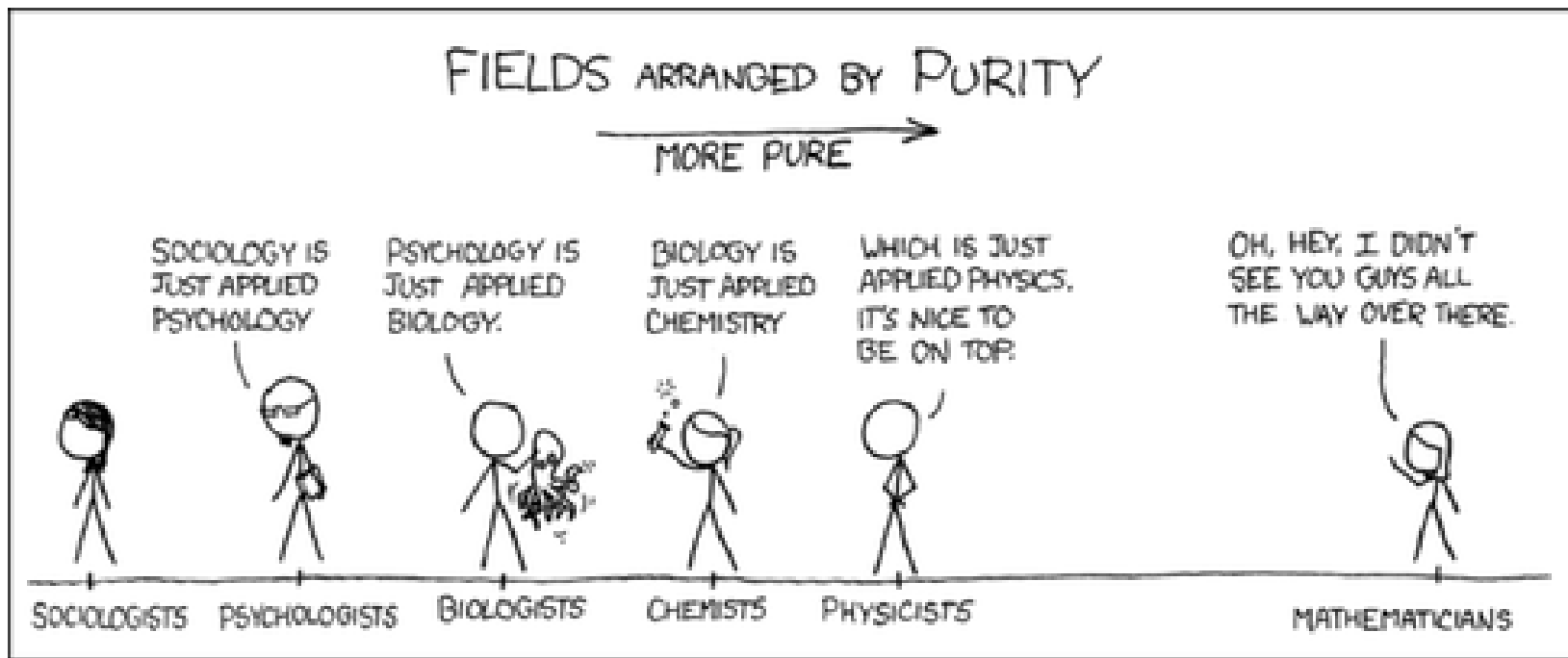


"This really is an innovative approach, but I'm afraid we can't consider it. It's never been done before."

The benefits

- “The result are several collaborations, that were not even in the project call, but that are truly interdisciplinary and exciting –
This wouldn't have occurred to us, if it hadn't been for the different views I have as a natural scientist (and a bit idealistic natural scientist) compared to the pragmatic views of the social fellow.”
- “I have just submitted a marie curie application that has a strong natural but also a strong social component. I would have never done it before, if I hadn't been interacting with social scientists.”
- “The way I look at ecosystems has changed as a result of interacting with social scientists. Before, I looked at ecosystems as if they were in an ideal/pristine world. I was interested in understanding the functioning of biological interactions alone (it's still what I love the most), but I now realise that the social component is as key as the natural.”

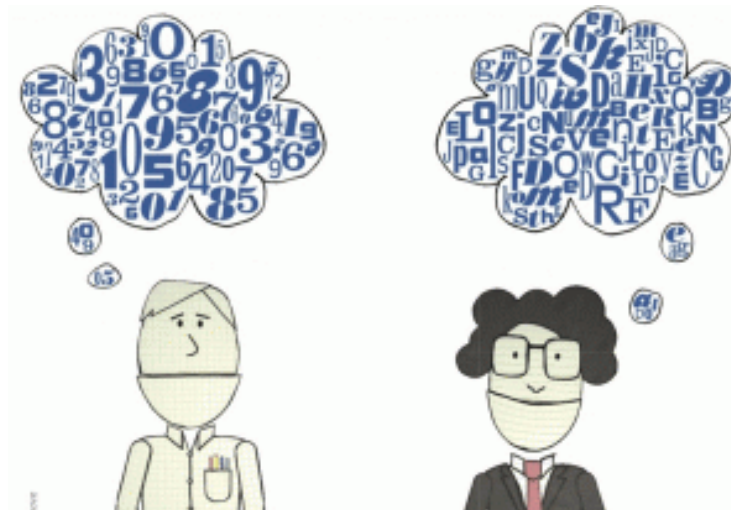
Lessons learned 1: Respect



Lesson Learned 2: Personalities

“The social science fellow in the project and I (the natural science fellow) get along very well, which is always a prerequisite (I believe) to be able to work with somebody”

“the relationship was especially extremely enriching.”



Lesson Learned 3: Time and resource

- “it is a pity that as a team we are so disparate that there is precious little opportunity to get under the skin of each others process.”



"I'M ON THE VERGE OF A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH, BUT I'M ALSO AT THAT POINT WHERE CHEMISTRY LEAVES OFF AND PHYSICS BEGINS, SO I'LL HAVE TO DROP THE WHOLE THING."

