



Role Play „Scientific Conference – Panel Discussion“

(Resource ID: 21)

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This teaching resource is allocated to following University:

KFUG – Karl-Franzens-University Graz

<http://www.sustainicum.at/en/modules/view/21.Role-Play-Scientific-Conference-Panel-Discussion>



Group work
Plenum



5 to 10 students



Up to 3 lecture
units



Internet
connection
necessary



English, German

The role play "Scientific Conference – Panel Discussion" encourages the participants to discuss inter- and transdisciplinary research. In addition to repeating and strengthening the previously developed teaching content, the participants will improve their social competences (e.g. discussion skills, communication skills etc.) Assigning participants different roles during the role play (supporter, critics, methodologists, practitioners etc.), will allow them to gain a new perspective on the topic – participants prepare for the discussion using provided literature.

Among classical methods of knowledge transfer, the complex issue of sustainability can be delivered using special interactive methods. Based on the assumption that a sustainable future requires a global population that can make themselves heard, develop convincing arguments and reflect

critically , the role play "Scientific Conference - Panel Discussion" has been developed.

Within various disciplines, such as educational science and psychology, the role play is an acknowledged and valuable method to reflect your own social action and behavior. In the context of sustainability at the university, this method helps to repeat and critically reflect on what participants have learned. Students find themselves in the role of an expert and learn to articulate and defend their own point of view as well as to communicate (professional- or experiential-) knowledge. The role play also allows students to broaden their social competences and strengthen the knowledge they gained from previous lessons.

The method "Scientific Conference - Panel Discussion" can be adapted for different target groups and topics and has been developed for the project "Sustainicum" to explore inter- and transdisciplinary research. Even Karl Popper expressed (1963:88) *"We are not students of some subject matter, but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline."*

Issues of sustainable development are characterized by their complexity and make inter- and transdisciplinary approaches necessary to approximately meet the comprehensive requirements. There are different definitions of ID and TD. The National Committee on Science, Engineering and Public Policy (2005) defines interdisciplinarity as follows:

"Interdisciplinary research (IDR) is a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice."

Moreover, Pohl and Hirsch Hadorn (2006) say that transdisciplinary research is characterised by four properties that can be combined in various ways. The properties are:

the exceeding and integration of disciplinary paradigms,
the participatory research,
the orientation on life-world problems and
the search for a universal unity of knowledge beyond disciplines.

This implies changed procedures in the research process, a number of new requirements for the role of the scientists and e.g. the integration with the

requirements of different methods, theories and forms of knowledge.

Although the above mentioned definition of ID and TD is only one out of many (different ideas and definitions of ID and TD are also discussed in this role play), it shows significant and new scientific requirements. This, on the other hand, results in the roles for the role play method "Scientific Conference - Panel Discussion". The "building block" is prepared for a "Panel Discussion, Scientific Conference on inter- and transdisciplinary research" and simulates a real life situation in a scientific environment.

DIRECTIONS:

Specially prepared for the inter-and transdisciplinary teaching. In this case the tool has been prepared for scientists (scientific role play) who attend a simulated scientific conference. requires specific preparation time to review literature and should take place at the end of a seminar or training (on a chosen topic).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

If the focus is not on an internal scientific discussion, the role play could be part of a classic TD stakeholder workshop. Organisers should create new roles, such as regional actors who have participated in TD processes, or NGO representatives, etc.

Moreover, participants could still discuss in their roles as scientists. In their roles they should then get feedback from those who have taken the role as a stakeholder. This sharpens the view regarding the issues beyond the scientific context.

Regardless of the type and the content of the course, this concept is individually modifiable. Texts need to be replaced and roles should be redefined/adjusted. By further adaptation and by adding new articles (English literature) one can achieve an English version of this role play.

Learning Outcomes

- Curriculum can be deepened and strengthened
- Curriculum can be reflected critically from different perspectives
- Participants will learn in the role of experts and can clearly articulate and defend their own point of view with technical arguments
- Participants can broaden their social competences (discussion skills, communication skills, etc.)

Relevance for Sustainability

The inter- and transdisciplinary research is the response of the complex challenges of our contemporary society. Issues of sustainability make new research approaches and the connection of practical and scientific knowledge necessary. Therefore it is essential to develop the research processes, methods and practical experiences in terms of TD research in teaching. Students need to know about TD and ID and how research methods and techniques of this approach work. This can be done by individuals who take on certain roles of experts which are always based on literature and education.

Related Teaching Resources

No specific previous knowledge / related resources required

Preparation Efforts

Low

Access

Free

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