Paper #1 Interdisciplinary Studies

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Interdisciplinary Studies

Interdisciplinary studies have made scholars around the world debate a definitive definition that is widely accepted (Nissani, 1995). As stated in the article it brings together some form of two or more distinctive disciplines (Nissani, 1995). With this definition it is important to know what disciplines are, to be able to decipher the homonym. A homonym is a word that shares the same spelling but has two or more different meanings to it.

A discipline can be any comparatively self-contained and isolated domain of human experience that possesses its community of experts (Nissani, 1995). This can be further divided into hundreds if not thousands of subdisciplines. Many scholars can agree that most academic disciplines take up the majority of the total. This can include things such are economics, chemistry, and computer science. This does not stop there but there is one thing that they all share which is in situations disciplines are assisted by standards, common sense, and instinct. As humans develop new ways of operating things some of the existing disciplines will be replaced or merged to create new ones (Nissani, 1995). Many of the main academic disciplines could be replaced with newer ones shortly.

When it comes to interdisciplinary activities it brings together two or more. When this is done it can come with great benefits to problem-solving and the ease of knowledge required. It is important to note that most disciplines are compatible. This is because even if they do not share anything in common in the practical sense. Their methodology of research could be applied to another to solve a problem and so on. Interdisciplinary studies differ from traditional disciplinary approaches because they are not set in stone. They have the leisure of practicing or trying ways that are not locked down to one certain way. Then this is the multidisciplinary approach which can be extremely beneficial in complex issues. This is a melting pot of all ideas, concepts, and

methodologies. These types of approaches see resounding success since they have all their bases covered.

For example, Nissani (1995) described Gregor Mendel's work in combining biology and statistics to find evidence to support his research. This was a big advantage of interdisciplinary work that led Gregor Mendel to create the study of evolution. When combing interdisciplinary studies can change the perspective of the issue and try to resolve it using different techniques from a different discipline. Certain subjects can be best taught through interdisciplinary education (Nissani, 1995). What Nissani means by this is when talking about an educational subject it can be beneficial to teach interdisciplinary studies by combining disciplines to allow students to be able to understand the subject better. One approach to this is to teach the subject matter from different disciplines' perspectives. Then combine them all to have a more complete whole on the subject. Just as with many things in life, there are some challenges involved with an interdisciplinary approach.

The biggest challenge involved with interdisciplinary approaches is that the subject in question could be too specific to combine or mix disciplines. For example, studying celestial objects in the night sky on the principle of economics or accounting will result in a more challenging understanding of what is occurring. This is when using a more disciplinary approach could surpass an interdisciplinary approach. Focusing on one discipline when it comes to the extremes of science or mathematics would provide researchers with better results. In most cases, there can be a connection between disciplines even at the smallest scale. This would still be considered interdisciplinary despite not melding every aspect into one and creating a grand breakthrough.

The biggest takeaway from *Fruit, Salads, and Smoothies* is that the definition of interdisciplinary studies is not set in stone. Nissani (1995) states “Moreover, because such definition attempt to confer upon this term a precision it does not possess, they run the risk of missing its essential nature”. These types of interdisciplinary studies create a broader understanding of the subject matter. When this is conducted in a classroom teachers can expect higher engagement and possibly even grade levels. Another key takeaway is that the most popular interdisciplinary studies today could be something of the past in the future. As the world changes around us the biggest interdisciplinary studies of today could be put on the back burner (Nissani, 1995). One discipline that will remain interchangeable when creating interdisciplinary studies in mathematics. This subject can be applied to many subjects beyond its reach and it is why it is used so widely in other fields of study.

In this article that was created by Nissani, it is difficult to pinpoint something that is least helpful. There is one thing that should be known but, on a scale, it is a lot lower than the other contents in the article. That is many times in the past it was strange to experts to be mixing ideas and methodologies with other subjects in their field. This could be credited to experts being highly specialized in one subject matter and being unfamiliar with others. So, the mixing to create interdisciplinary disciplines was seen as not needed. This information is still beneficial to know about but as stated earlier, it is lower on a knowledge scale. One question that many share about interdisciplinarity is that all subjects are going to be a huge combination of multiple subjects that some experts do not share any interest in. In Moti Nissani’s article *Fruits, Salads, and Smoothies* she created a broad definition of interdisciplinary studies that could encompass the vastness of the topic without being too specific. Then later in the article, she expresses the importance of the concept and how it can bring many fields together about a topic or problem.

The importance of cooperation and understanding different academic fields allowed humans to create and discover breathtaking breakthroughs.

Reference:

Nissani, Moti (1995). "Fruits, salads, and smoothies: A working definition of interdisciplinarity. Journal of Educational Thought. 29:119-126.

http://www.is.wayne.edu/mnissani/pagepub/smoothie.htm