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The goals of interdisciplinary studies

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As we commence the publication of volume two of IJMCS, it is, perhaps apt to reflect on what our engagement with interdisciplinary studies might be. In our view, the ultimate achievement of interdisciplinary studies can be anchored to the assertion of Turner (2014, p.3) who states: ‘really fruitful interdisciplinary interactions happen when the core ideas of one discipline can be found application in another, even metaphorically’. For us, the key concept here is applicability. The declared achievements of interdisciplinary studies, therefore, must in real terms, speak to the extent to which core ideas from one discipline have been applied in another discipline.

There are two ways in which such application across disciplines can manifest. First, interdisciplinary interaction could manifest in the form of using frameworks from one discipline to explain phenomena in another. Second, frameworks from one discipline could be used to proffer solutions to problems in another one. In essence, interdisciplinary studies contribute to our ability to resolve problems and to better understand situations in one discipline through the use of frameworks from another discipline.

To further illustrate these outcomes of interdisciplinary studies, we draw on a number of studies that have been carried out and which have benefitted immensely from our ability to use ideas and experiences across disciplines. Perhaps one of the more commonly used frameworks across disciplines is the framework provided by French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). However, his various work cuts across the disciplines of education, language and academic discourse (Grenfell, 2012). It is, therefore, not surprising that many scholars in these field have tapped into the framework offered by Bourdieu, to understand and find solutions to problems in their disciplines.

At the heart of interdisciplinary studies and its achievements is what Grenfell (2012, p.2) refers to as ‘an opening out’ of human relations which has enabled us to ‘raise horizons beyond [conventional] disciplinary boundaries’. In essence, our understanding of any one situation is no longer simply informed by developments within the discipline such a situation is located. Rather, we are now able to draw from a multiplicity of disciplines to enable us understand these seemingly intractable situations and in many cases, find solutions to them.

In the context of the role of ‘opening out’ of boundaries which we have identified with interdisciplinary studies, we explore a number of studies which appear to have benefitted from the interdisciplinary approach, and thus, achieved the ultimate goals of interdisciplinary studies. In their edited book, *Language, ethnography and education*, Grenfell *et al.*, (2012) provide us with a vivid illustration of how interdisciplinary studies can be used to achieve the goal of providing a better understanding of situations. Drawing on, and applying Bourdieu’s (1986) principle of multiplicity of cultures and the principles of ethnography, they provide us with a new and different understanding of literacy, highlighting what ethnography brings to literacy and thereby showing the possibilities of an ethnographic understanding of literacy. This interdisciplinary engagement has in effect offered us a different lens for viewing and understanding literacy.

But interdisciplinary studies do not simply aim to offer new and different understandings. Indeed, as expected of any fruitful academic engagement, interdisciplinary studies also help us to identify solution.

Individual contributions from the book cited above provide evidence of this. Street (2012) illustrates this in his use of a multidisciplinary approach which draws on Bourdieu's capital frameworks, ethnographic principles and the principles of new literacy Studies to suggest his own solution to the problem of literacy in the context of India. Similarly, Pahl (2012, p.89) gainfully employed the principles of interdisciplinary studies which employed ethnographic principles and the principles of New Literacy Studies to develop pedagogic solutions to the problem of teaching and promoting creativity in the classroom through what she calls the tracing of the teacher's 'pedagogic habitus.' While we are not particularly concerned with the detail of these studies, we are keen to highlight the fact that they illustrate the ways in which a multi/interdisciplinary approach can be fruitful and useful to us.

Achieving the goal of promoting understanding and proffering solutions was at the heart of the drive to set up IJMCS. A key question as we embark on the production of volume 2, therefore, is have the papers we have published contributed to the achievement of these goals? We have no doubt that we have strived to achieve these goals in the various issues that have been previously published. Crucially, the papers published in this issue provide some form of evidence that IJMCS is focused on using the notion of interdisciplinary studies to achieve these goals.

In their paper titled, 'Why are Spiritual Aspects of Care so hard to Address in Nursing Education?' a literature review (1993-2015), Ali, Wattis and Snowden cut across disciplines to explore the concept of spirituality, which although is itself more located in the religious discipline, is crucially examined in the context of the health discipline. Similarly, Konstantinides-Vladimirou in her paper titled, 'Cypriot secondary school teachers' professional life phases: a research-informed view of career-long motivation' employs the principles of motivation in psychology to suggest solutions to the problem of motivation in education. McKelvey and Speare in 'Teachers Watching Teachers: exploring the influence of films on emergent teacher identities' invite us to view the issue of professionalism amongst teachers through the lens of another discipline, film and media. Finally, in 'Can reading skills which are developed through the reading of music be transferred to benefit the early decoding of text?' Bettenev and Brooks offer solution to the problem of textual decoding (literacy) by drawing on the principles of music reading. In essence, the four articles published in this issue have all shown how the benefits of interdisciplinary studies can be achieved and more importantly, they have illustrated the achievement of these benefits across a range of disciplines.

As illustrated by the articles published in this issue, IJMCS is staying true to its averred goals. It is using the journal to contrite to the process of 'opening up' and defying 'conventional boundaries'. Contributions have come from various disciplines and have all gone beyond the conservative boundaries that can be imposed by any one discipline. Our hope is that the journal will continue to open up this interaction and help to find solutions and promote understanding through such interactions. Welcome to Volume 2 issue 1.

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