

Measuring interdisciplinarity: A mixed-methods approach

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There is nothing new about the concept of interdisciplinarity. It pops up from time to time in the debate over the organization of science and technology, and since the mid-1990s it's been guiding new funding initiatives, university reforms, etc. It is probably the single most defining characteristic of the so-called mode-2 science, described in *The New Production of Knowledge* (1994). All this hype has given rise to a growing body of research on interdisciplinarity. Most studies have used and continue to use co-authorship or citation data to study the relations between disciplines. These approaches are very convenient from a network perspective because of the availability of large digital databases. However, we can only answer very few and simple questions with these approaches. We can't answer questions like: What characterizes the actual research collaboration that leads to a co-authored publication? Why are people citing a specific paper more than other papers? And does interdiscipline citations necessarily imply any exchange of ideas, methods, etc.? In this paper we discuss other alternative approaches to measuring interdisciplinarity, based on a research project on the field of humanities in Denmark. Here we use survey data and systematic readings of academic texts to study various aspects of interdisciplinary relations: the role of academic training and supervision, research collaboration on project proposals, empirical work and publications, and influence of other fields of science on research styles in the humanities. We argue that the combination of different methods (including bibliometric ones) contributes significantly to the understanding of the research object.