

How to cultivate interdisciplinarity and why

For the Institute of Advanced Studies, the reason of growing interdisciplinarity comes from the very DNA of USP. Since its inception, the University has focused not only on research and training in qualitative science and culture, but in particular on training, generation and dissemination of knowledge in favor of a new society in a developing country.

USP is an avant-garde and modernist project generated by a creative collective volition, powered by a prospective vision of concrete intentionality. It is a university that, together with other public and private actors, has had a central role in shaping and improving this society. It is embedded in the cities where its campuses are located - in particular the capital - and in the public life of the State of São Paulo and Brazil.

Considering the conditions of its creation and the integrity of this ambitious project, as well as the collective aspiration and an ongoing pilot-project management of its objectives, the University has become extensive, mature and adult. The IEA is the result of this maturity and a model example of the creative and regenerative capacity of USP.

Designed in a particular historical context - the democratization of the country - the IEA was established in 1986 as an experimental and unique field for interdisciplinarity in the heart of USP. This Institute is undoubtedly a bold proposition of the University, which has invested in interdisciplinarity as a source of effective contributions of academia in proposing public policies for the consolidation of a quality democracy.

At the time of creation of the Institute, after a survey which has identified models and active interdisciplinary practices in academic contexts in different parts of the world, the IEA gained a first and temporary housing on a building originally designed to house the rectory. That space has enabled the development and improvement of a basic operational program consisting of research groups, chairs and visiting professors.

In line with the Institute's direction, these actors have promoted interdisciplinary research, debate, and exhibition and dissemination of the knowledge generated in this environment. Important contributions to public policies in Brazil have been generated thanks to this configuration. To date, the auditorium - currently Events Room - and the transdisciplinary journal - of large impact in the academic, political and cultural contexts of the country - have been the main interfaces between the IEA and society.

In the last four years, besides continuing and updating this basic operational program, the IEA has invested in institutional critique processes and thus in the review of its operation, and internal (within USP) and external interactions. Special attention has been given to the notions of academic "environment" and to the constitution of a renewed ambience for this permanent experimental field focused on interdisciplinarity in a *glocalized* (global + local) condition.

It is important to point out that Brazil today is quite different from that one of post-dictatorship: a democracy and a regional centrality in a glocalized and post-modernist world. Its regional context has also undergone profound changes. New settings, and geopolitical and environmental imbalances affect the "world order" in which we operate, thanks to technological advances and in particular the Internet. Modernity is definitely a mutant, liquid condition; a complexity that affects everyone and everything. From there comes a new nature that is being modeled in various dimensions, either by biopolitics, biotechnology, genetics, virtuality, or the post-human imposing himself without embarrassment on previous notions of nature.

Given this new situation it is necessary that the Institute of Advanced Studies invests in changing its hybrid, ubiquitous and multidimensional condition. This is done by operating in simultaneity and synchronicity of reflections, actions and performances; being a place for meeting and socializing, of free association of ideas, experiences, knowledge and expertise; encouraging and promoting coexistence and cooperation without shirking its critical and questioning role, either internally or externally. It should also strengthen its position as a strategic and meta-critical platform at USP, able to constantly update its operational program in line with its genealogy, history, memory and context.

Research, study and innovation should also aim at new epistemologies, new ways of thinking and acting, ie aim transdisciplinarity. Despite acting and contributing in the present, its inspiration is the future. Therefore, the IEA is also a field of propositions and a project incubator, open to risk and unpredictability, a multi-dimensional environment in the hyperspace.

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