

One-day Interdisciplinary Research Workshop

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Interdisciplinary research will undoubtedly be the privileged approach to tackle complex problems in the future. Large granting agencies and multinational corporations have already recognized this and have earmarked a considerable proportion of their research resources to this approach.

One of the reasons why this type of research is more productive than the traditional disciplinary approach is that innovative, original solutions to real problems often come from a wide variety of sources, some of which are not immediately obvious to a specialist working within a single discipline. A case in point is the story of the Australian entomologist who was interested in the sociology of ants. He talked about his work to civil engineers, and together they successfully developed an unusual but eminently practical model for the rapid evacuation of buildings in case of an emergency.

Interdisciplinary Grantsmanship is not a simple endeavour. One of the major challenges for investigators from various disciplines is the difficulty to communicate in a constructive and creative way. This is the main focus of our workshop.

In our one-day interactive workshop directed primarily to independent researchers, participants will learn to think in a non-linear fashion, and to widen their scientific horizons beyond their own discipline. By looking farther than the obvious and facile protocols, they will be able propose to granting agencies bold, original and creative solutions to real problems.

N.B.: The workshop takes approximately 8hrs from start to finish. The breaks and the working lunch are periods of time to be used by the participants to get acquainted, to discuss, to network and to exchange ideas for potential projects in a relaxed atmosphere favourable to non-linear thinking. These time periods should therefore be considered as an integral part of the workshop.

February 2013



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Workshop schedule

9:00 -10:15 **Session 1:** General principles of scientific communication and their application to writing grant applications. Why scientific texts should be written in a simple and pleasant style. Grant evaluation criteria. The objectives of the granting agency and of the reviewer. Strategies for presenting a project.

10:15-10:30 **Coffee break** (with the possibility of taking coffee back to session 2)

10:30 - **Session 2:** Group dynamics applied to an interdisciplinary scientific context. Examples of interdisciplinary projects taken from past workshops and from real cases will be discussed. The principles of psychologist Edward de Bono, and of cognitive scientist Keith Sawyer will be presented for use in the Group Genius exercise.

11:30 – **Concentric circles exercise:** Participants are divided in two groups, and sit in concentric circles. The group in the inner circle has 20 minutes to start elaborating a project (topic submitted by instructor). The group in the outer circle observes the methodology. There is a 10 min discussion and the groups switch. This is a new addition to the workshop introduced after consultations with a psychologist who suggested that the emphasis of the workshop should be directed towards interdisciplinary methodology rather than towards producing an original project

12:45 - **Working Lunch** during which the two groups of participants will present their interests and their potential contribution to a collaborative project. Group leaders will be chosen by the participants at that time (this is also an innovation)

14:00 - „**Group genius**” exercise: Each group has 90 minutes to apply the information and principles learnt during the morning to the creation of an interdisciplinary project. The emphasis will be placed on the discussion methodology as well as on the originality and interdisciplinary content of the projects.

15:45 –**Presentation of the projects over coffee.** Each group presents its project and a critical discussion follows.

17:00 - **End of workshop**

Pedagogical material

Participants will receive a paper copy of the slides in PDF format as well as worksheets for the group genius exercise.



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