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Paper 169

Interdisciplinary Gerontological Research by Design

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Abstract: Increasingly, gerontological research requires interdisciplinary approaches to address complex research questions. Design methods have been proven to facilitate the growth of interdisciplinary research as they are agile, adaptive, and iterative (White and Deevy, 2020). Involving 140 researchers across 6 faculties, this study used design methods to create interdisciplinary research on ageing. This paper discusses how Design methods were used to successfully grow this research culture for over 5 years.

Low and high touch approaches to Design were used. A cross-campus environmental scan was designed to understand cultural commonalities and differences between disciplines and Design workshops were created to harness interdisciplinary understanding, encouraging groups to create interdisciplinary proposals. Ethnographic research and surveys were conducted to assess how Design methods had influenced research culture. Outputs and partnerships were also assessed, and an international scientific committee reviewed interdisciplinary research proposals.

Results showed that interdisciplinary partnerships and collaborations increased across faculties. Positive changes in culture were observed, with increased interactions among researchers. Scientific reviewers commented that proposals addressed needs, insured stakeholders inclusion, and were likely to have a positive impact on older people. It demonstrated that Design methods can assist in the creation of interdisciplinary gerontological research. Design assisted researchers to find 'common languages' and was beneficial in both group communication and proposal creation. Collaborating with other disciplines offered researchers perspectives that were otherwise inaccessible and lead to more inclusive research.

White, P. J. and Deevy, C. (2020) 'Designing an Interdisciplinary Research Culture in Higher Education: A Case Study', *Interchange*, 51(4), pp. 499-515.

Paper 170

Reconceptualizing the Citizen in Long-Term Care Research: Using Assemblage Methodology

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Abstract: This presentation maps jurisdictional grey zones related aging and disability programs and services in one Canadian province, with a focus on residential long-term care (LTC). It outlines the policy contradictions and service gaps that shape the realities of older (and) disabled adults by defining their status and entitlements as citizens. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "assemblage" is taken up as a methodological approach that can support intersectional analyses of jurisdictional grey zones. Following Baker and McGurik's (2017) recommendation to operationalize assemblage in critical policy research by "adopting an ethnographic sensibility, tracing sites and situations, and revealing labours of assembling," I collected and considered three interrelated research projects that examine and engage the aging-disability nexus within the context of LTC homes: the first project is theoretical and conceptualized the nexus as it is variously understood in aging studies and disability studies; the second involved ethnographic field research in LTC homes to map promising relational approaches to quality late life long-term care, and the third used a participatory co-researcher model with disabled activists living in LTC to develop cases of promising approaches in community care and social determinants of health. Thinking with and from the intersections of these distinct but interrelated projects, I consider how current policy directions related to LTC point to the empowerment of institutions rather than of the people who live and work there.

Baker, T. & McGurik, P. (2017). Assemblage thinking as methodology: Commitments and practices for critical policy research. *Territory Politics Governance*, 5(4), 1-18.