



Oral presentation at British Society of Gerontology 50th Annual Conference.

Parallel Session 6 - Group 10, 9th July 2021, 14:00 - 15:00

Session type: Paper. Track: Innovation in theories, methods and critical perspectives

Title: Interdisciplinary Gerontological Research by Design

Authors: P.J. White, Audrey Patocs, Parminder Raina, Ine Wauben, Laura Harrington

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.

Firstly, a cross-campus environmental scan was designed to understand cultural commonalities and differences between disciplines. Design tools and workshops were created to harness interdisciplinary communication and understanding, encouraging disparate groups to create interdisciplinary proposals. 12 months after, ethnographic research was 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 committee reviewers commented that proposals addressed needs, insured stakeholders inclusion, and were likely to have a positive impact for older people. This research demonstrated that Design methods can assist in the creation of interdisciplinary gerontological research. Design assisted researchers to find 'common languages' and this 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.

References

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

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

White, P.J., Deevy, C. Designing an Interdisciplinary Research Culture in Higher Education: A Case Study. *Interchange* **51**, 499–515 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-020-09406-0>