

# Methods for Transdisciplinary Research

A Primer for Practice

von

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## Leseprobe

The logical structure of each chapter of the book, as well as that of the book as a whole, is motivated by one central purpose: to support researchers as directly as possible in carrying out their transdisciplinary research. To this end we have made the following assumptions, based on our own experience carrying out transdisciplinary research.

When describing the integration methods and instruments collected and analyzed in this book we have kept two things in mind with the hope of making the book as useful as possible for dealing with integration issues. First, the methods are described in such a manner that they can be used by different transdisciplinary research projects dealing with different problem fields and drawing on different constellations of scientific fields; that is, they have a context-independent, general value. Second, it is equally important not to lose sight of the context-dependence of transdisciplinary research because what one can learn from the individual examples—that is, from the application of the methods in specific research projects with their individual problem contexts and the constellation of scientific fields—can be of great benefit for research practice as well (cf. Krohn 2008).

In addition, the first way of describing the methods—as context independent—fulfills the purpose of giving, from an epistemological point of view, a structured overview of useful integration methods. Here a position within the philosophy of science is being assumed, one which takes a stand on which specific approaches to the generation of knowledge are appropriate to transdisciplinary research.

Therefore, we have chosen to give the readers of this book, in the central Chapters II and III, first the decontextualized, then the contextualized descriptions of the integration methods and integration strategies.

In Chapter II, the integration instruments and methods that we have identified in concrete transdisciplinary model projects are detached from their projects and described independently of both their concrete research contexts and the given constellation of scientific fields. At the end of the description of each of these integration methods the reader will find a reference to the specific research project from which this method either originated or which project used it in an exemplary way.

In Chapter III, there follows a description of those research projects whose integration methods were evaluated. To be sure, the research project is not described here in its entirety; instead, the description concentrates on the "integration history" of each project, so that the reader will, with a focus on a description of the integration tasks involved, be able to understand these tasks, and, also, the research design and the research process. By describing the integration instruments contextually one can highlight the integrative processes of particular importance for the transdisciplinary research process. Following up on the abstract description of the methods

presented in Chapter II the reader is in a position in Chapter III to see the concrete ways in which the methods are used. The description of each project and its respective research strategy also makes it possible to recognize whether the integration method in question "works well" by itself or whether it promises more success for an integrative research project when used in conjunction with other methods. At the end of each project description there is a "fact sheet" that provides further information, for example, concerning project-related literature. The publications most important for the project are listed first.