

Anti-discipline

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Words and Voices of Innovation

The cultural language of innovation

Anti-discipline

The anti-discipline is a method that breaks down the barriers that separate disciplines and specializations. In Europe, at the beginning of the 19th century, St Patrick's College in Maynooth – the National Catholic Seminary of Ireland founded in 1795, triggered an educational process aimed at embracing this method. Each student, without exception, encompassed a wide range of studies that included, in addition to Theology: Humanities, Rhetoric, Belles Lettres, Logic, Mathematics, and Physics.

The American biologist Edward O. Wilson (*On Human Nature*, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 1978) understands anti-discipline as an 'adversary relation that often exists when fields of study at adjacent levels first begin to interact' and generate creative tensions (Wilson, 1978, p.7). With the aim of breaking down barriers that separate disciplines – which prevents the solution of problems increasingly difficult to deal with – Joichi Ito, director of the Media Lab at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston), founded by Nicholas Negroponte, fights to ensure that 'more people [can] work in the wide-open white space between disciplines – the anti-disciplinary space'.

Broadening the perspective one can see, in the economy of ideas, the significance and continuing growth of the contribution of convergence – defined by Tom Siegfried (*A Beautiful Math: John Nash, Game Theory, and the Modern Quest for a Code of Nature*, Joseph Henry Press, Washington, D.C., 2006) as "merger fever" – between scientific (mathematics and the physical and natural sciences) and humanities subjects, and how open innovation, whose richness lies in the cultural diversity of participants, can accelerate that trend.

Keywords

creative tensions;cultural diversity;open innovation

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