



„Yes, and“

Techniques of improvisational theater in the co-design of
transdisciplinary research (TDR)

PhD Ina Opitz and Sorka Tzschabran

TD-Lab Berlin University Alliance



TD-Lab Berlin University Alliance

- Services for researchers of the Alliance: consulting, funding, training
- Own formats of co-exploration and participatory agenda setting
- Own formats of bridging science and practice



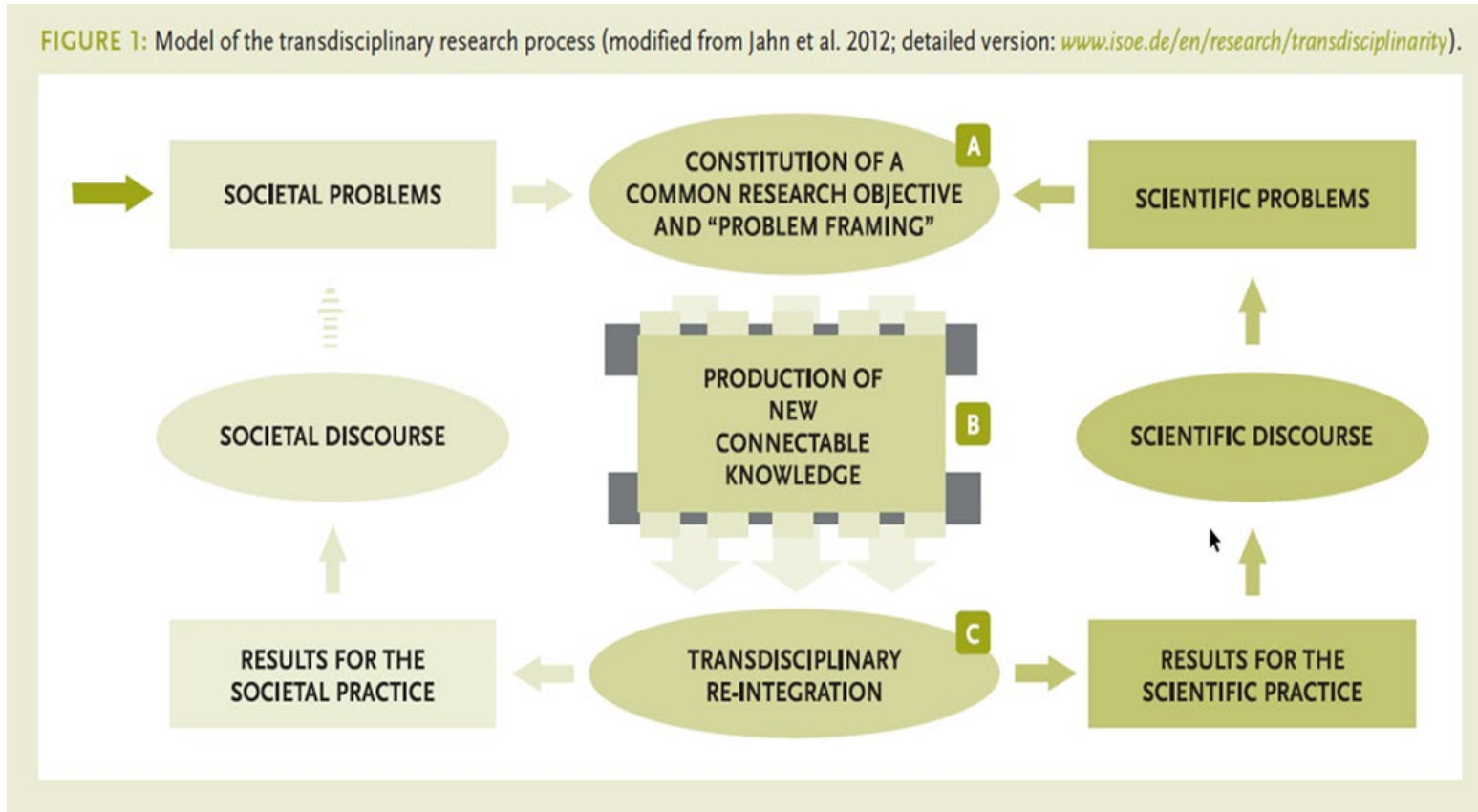
TransImpro Workshop

- Workshop format with adapted methods from improvisational theatre
- Developed for co-design
- Dealing with specific content and process oriented challenges



Ideal model of transdisciplinary research

FIGURE 1: Model of the transdisciplinary research process (modified from Jahn et al. 2012; detailed version: www.isoe.de/en/research/transdisciplinarity).





Challenges Joint Problem Framing

Content oriented challenges	Process oriented challenges
Exploring and respecting diversity of interests and perspectives	Various time, personal and budget resources for the research process
Application of diverse knowledge resources	Knowledge and access to useful methods
Dealing with spontaneous changes and unknown relations between the participants	Enable high quality of group interactions

TransImpro Workshop

- Creative, artistic approach dealing with the challenges
- WHY?
- Leaving habitual ways of thinking and working
- Exploring implicit knowledge, values and emotions
- Opening minds for other perspectives





Impro-Workshop
Veränderung und
schöner Raum
5. Juni 2023
Personal Learning Experience Institute

Principles of improvisation theatre

1. The first idea is the best.
2. “Yes, and ...” instead of “Yes, but ...”
3. Trust the team, support each other.
4. Make “mistakes” and celebrate them.
5. Listen.
6. Breathe.
7. Laugh.



Small Impro-Session: Warm-up – Impro exercise - Reflection

Impro Exercise – the story

You live in 2039. Transdisciplinary research is well established and accepted at universities and in research institutes across Europe.

You **travel back to the year 2024.**

As a group, tell us together **what social, technical or political innovation** has contributed to the establishment of transdisciplinary research, **how it was developed** and **who was involved** in the development.



Impro Exercise – the guideline

- Groups of 3-4 participants
- 3 min to negotiate e.g. your common vision, your travel mode, or the changed future
- Act as a group
 - Play out your common travel through times. How do you arrive physically in 2024 coming from 2039?
 - First person tells your common vision. What has changed?
 - Next person complements a sentence or two, beginning with “Yes, and ...” about how it became real.
 - and so on
 - The first person finishes the story with the last addition.
 - Play your travel back to the year 2039.
 - At home you recognize, something went wrong with time traveling. Your future changed. Play how it feels to enter in a new 2039.



Reflection Improvisation techniques

What emotions did you have? How did you feel?

What happened to you while playing improvisation theatre?



Reflection Visions

What was surprising? What was interesting?

What similarities and differences do you have recognized?

What would you estimate, which values did the visions mirror?



Reflection Improvisation and TDR

How would you assess the usability of improvisation techniques for transdisciplinary research?

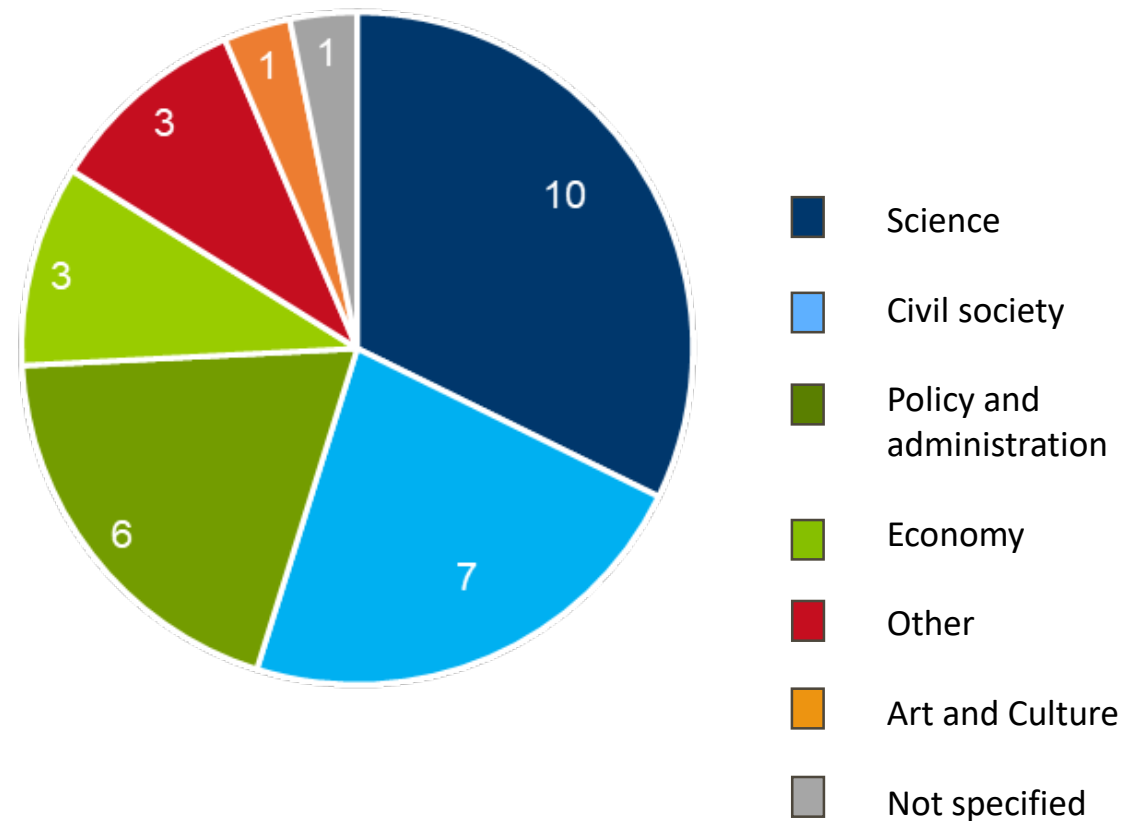
What positive cases could you imagine?

What do you think, for which cases is improvisation theatre not feasible?



TransImpro Workshop

- Aim: Finding common research issues in a broader field
 - Climate Change and Public Space
 - Artificial Intelligence and Society
- 10-15 participants from all spheres
- 3 improvisation techniques plus content reflection



TransImpro Workshop

Inputs

- Planning and Invitation
- Moderation
- Documentation
- Integration of research issues



TransImpro Workshop

Outputs

- 4-6 relevant common research issues
- Exploring shared values
- Networking





TransImpro Workshop

Evaluation

The exchange with other participants had added value for me.



In the workshop, I realized that my knowledge on the subject is relevant for others.



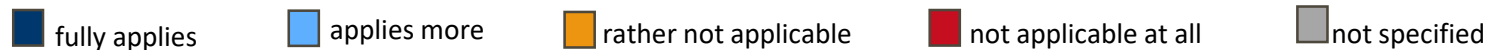
In the workshop, I became particularly aware of my own specific perspective on the topic.



I learned new perspectives in the workshop.



I learned new things in the workshop.





TransImpro Workshop

How can improvisation techniques improve transdisciplinary work?

- Principles of improvisation theatre as good communication guideline
- Creating eye-level
- Support relationships
- Negotiating values playfully
- Explore diversity of perspectives



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Questions + Comments + Feedback



What participants have said:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0F16_uLU9CU

Thank you for your participation!

More information about TD-Lab
and its formats:



Contact: td-lab@berlin-university-alliance.de

