

Transdisciplinary graduate education in marine resource science and management

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Abstract

In this article we consider the current educational needs for science and policy in marine resource management, and we propose a way to address them. The existing literature on cross-disciplinary education in response to pressing environmental problems is vast, particularly in conservation biology. However, actual changes in doctoral-level marine science programs lag behind this literature considerably. This is in part because of concerns about the time investment in cross-disciplinary education and about the job prospects offered by such programs. There is also a more fundamental divide between educational programs that focus on knowledge generation and those that focus on professional development, which can reinforce the gap in communication between scientists and marine resource managers. Ultimately, transdisciplinary graduate education programs need not only to bridge the divide between disciplines, but also between types of knowledge. Our proposed curriculum aligns well with these needs because it does not sacrifice depth for breadth, and it emphasizes collaboration and communication among diverse groups of students, in addition to development of their individual knowledge and skills.

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