

Translational training for tomorrow's environmental scientists

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Abstract

Environmental science exists to seek solutions to problems related to human-nature interactions. Unfortunately, in many cases, environmental research findings are not effectively used because scientists are not able to convey their knowledge effectively to policy makers and the public, and/or because the questions they address are not directly linked to the answers stakeholders need. To address this issue, Schlesinger (2010 [1]) called for development of a “translational ecology” that would be understandable and usable by decision-makers, interest groups, and citizens. A barrier to usable science is that researchers are not usually trained to be translational. We convened a multi-disciplinary group of scholars to identify a comprehensive pedagogical approach for training doctoral students to be translational scientists. From this work has emerged a list of 53 skills, content areas, and dispositional attributes that lead to translational research in environmental science, as well as a set of instructional approaches that can be used to build those competencies. Future work will identify examples of how instructional activities can be linked to competencies to provide accessible tools and activities in support of a “community of practice” whose work enhances social-ecological resilience through translational environmental science.

Associated Project:

[Translational Ecology: A Pedagogical Framework to Integrate Natural & Social Sciences](#) [2]

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Links

[1] <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs13412-015-0333-x#CR13>

[2] <https://www.sesync.org/project/pursuit/translational-ecology>