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A DESIGN-BASED RESEARCH STUDY TO PROMOTE CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION USING A CASE FROM THE NEW ZEALAND DISABILITY FIELD

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"We are each of us angels with only one wing,
we can only fly as we embrace each other"

Abstract

This study developed and evaluated an approach to promote cross-disciplinary collaboration when studying complex real-world issues. Complex real-world issues, such as inclusion for those experiencing disability in New Zealand, have been found to be difficult to resolve. This is due to both the nature of complex real-world issues that cross disciplinary boundaries as well as epistemological differences held by members of the cross-disciplinary groups brought together to study them. The eight-phase approach developed in this study was designed to address these issues and promote cross-disciplinary collaboration through the employment of a critical realist framework and activities based on *Appreciative Inquiry* and *Future Search*. The evaluation of cross-disciplinary studies has also been found to be problematic as they are often judged against contradictory disciplinary criteria. This study, therefore, also developed a multidimensional evaluation process that recognises the interactive nature of cross-disciplinary collaboration. Findings from this study show that this newly developed process was useful to evaluate the approach. They also show that the approach did promote cross-disciplinary collaboration as well as furthered the understanding of cross-disciplinary collaboration and the factors that promote and hinder its development. Based on the study's findings recommendations are made as to how the approach can be refined and used in a range of settings and areas for further research are identified. In this way, the study contributes to a better understanding of factors that promote and hinder cross-disciplinary collaboration, and provides an approach and evaluation process that could be useful for other cross-disciplinary studies.

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