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Transdisciplinary education: A leverage point to foster transformative change for biodiversity conservation.

Wuebbelmann, Thea; Atienza Casas, Sara; Calicis, Camille; Candiago, Sebastian; DENDONCKER, Nicolas; Desair, Jomme; Fickel, Thomas; Finne, Eirik; Frison, Christine; Haensel, Maria; Hinsch, Malte; Kulfan, Tyler; Kumagai, Joy; Mialyk, Oleksandr; Nawarh, Maximilian; Nevzati, Fiona; Washbourne, Carla

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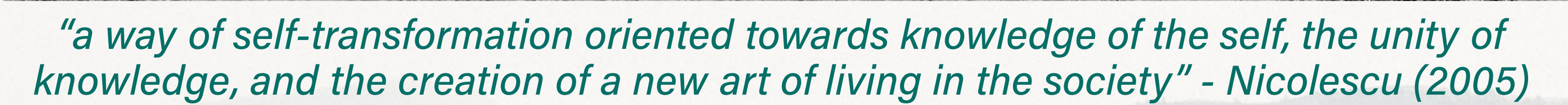
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INSIGHTS FROM A SUMMER SCHOOL

Fiona Nevzati; Carla Washbourne; Thea Wübbelmann



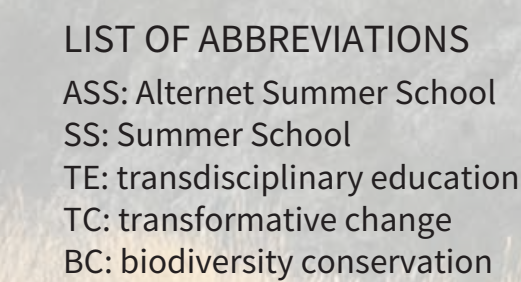
"The summerschool is like a butterfly, beautiful in its uniqueness, easily discarded as unimportant in the grand scheme of things but capable of contributing to a storm when integrated in the dynamic system"

Yes, the summerschool was transdisciplinary education and can contribute to biodiversity conservation through direct effects: reported behavioral change; and indirect effect: increased and better transdisciplinary research on biodiversity conservation and contribution to a system-wide change that is happening.

Every year, the “Alternet Summer School” takes place in Peyresq, a small sparsely populated village in the French Alps. The Summer School 2021 was held under the topic of “Transformation pathways to foster biodiversity and human wellbeing”. The 23 participants came from 20 different countries with backgrounds spanning from geography over social sciences and architecture to law, communication and natural sciences. Likewise, the 7 organizers and 19 speakers had different academic and research backgrounds. Besides lectures and field trips, the participants developed a project in a self-organizing and dynamic group work using different methods and perspectives.

- RQ1: What elements distinguish the summerschool as **"transdisciplinary education"**?
- RQ2: How does **transdisciplinary** education, lead to **transformative** change for biodiversity conservation?

We did a survey among the participants and organizers using the ASS 2021 as a case study to answer the above research question. We received 26 answers, including 7 answers from organizers and 19 from participants. The data was coded in NVivo following an inductive approach. Accordingly, the participants and organizers were analyzed separately in order to identify differences and possible improvements of the summerschool or transdisciplinary education in general.



The impact of the ASS cannot be quantified and relies on self-reported transformative changes. More robust findings could be distilled from sequential surveys following a cohort of graduates through time or by investigating multiple cohorts at the same time.

- Fostering the transdisciplinary elements;
- Monitoring the personal and professional development of alumni after the summerschool to have a clearer understanding of the impact.