Transdisciplinary education: A leverage point for transformative change

- INSIGHTS FROM A SUMMER SCHOOL -

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Nicolescu (2005)

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Luckerhoff et al. (2020)

“[confronting] scientific knowledge from established disciplines, their practical knowledge from intervention environments and their traditional knowledge that has stood the test of time.”

Transformative change - to what?

Transformation: *radical system change - shifts in values and beliefs, patterns of social behavior, and multilevel governance and management regimes*

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Within the context of the Alternet summer school:

Transformation pathways to foster biodiversity and human wellbeing

Research questions

How can the use of transdisciplinary education for early-career researchers serve as a key leverage point to foster transformative change in science education and biodiversity conservation?

Research questions

- What elements distinguish the summer school as “transdisciplinary education”?
- How does transdisciplinary education, as provided by the Alternet summer school, lead to transformative change for biodiversity conservation?

Methods

Alternet “summer” school 2021:

- October 6-16
- 23 participants from 20 countries (21 Ph.D. students),
  19 speakers
- Topic: *"Transformation pathways to foster biodiversity and wellbeing"*

Online survey Dec 21-Jan 22 / May 22

- *27 answers (20 from participants)*

Methods

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Nicolescu (2005); Luckerhoff et al. (2020)

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2b) How does transdisciplinary education, as provided by the Alternet Summer School, lead to transformative change for biodiversity conservation?

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- Inductive & deductive approach

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- NVivo software

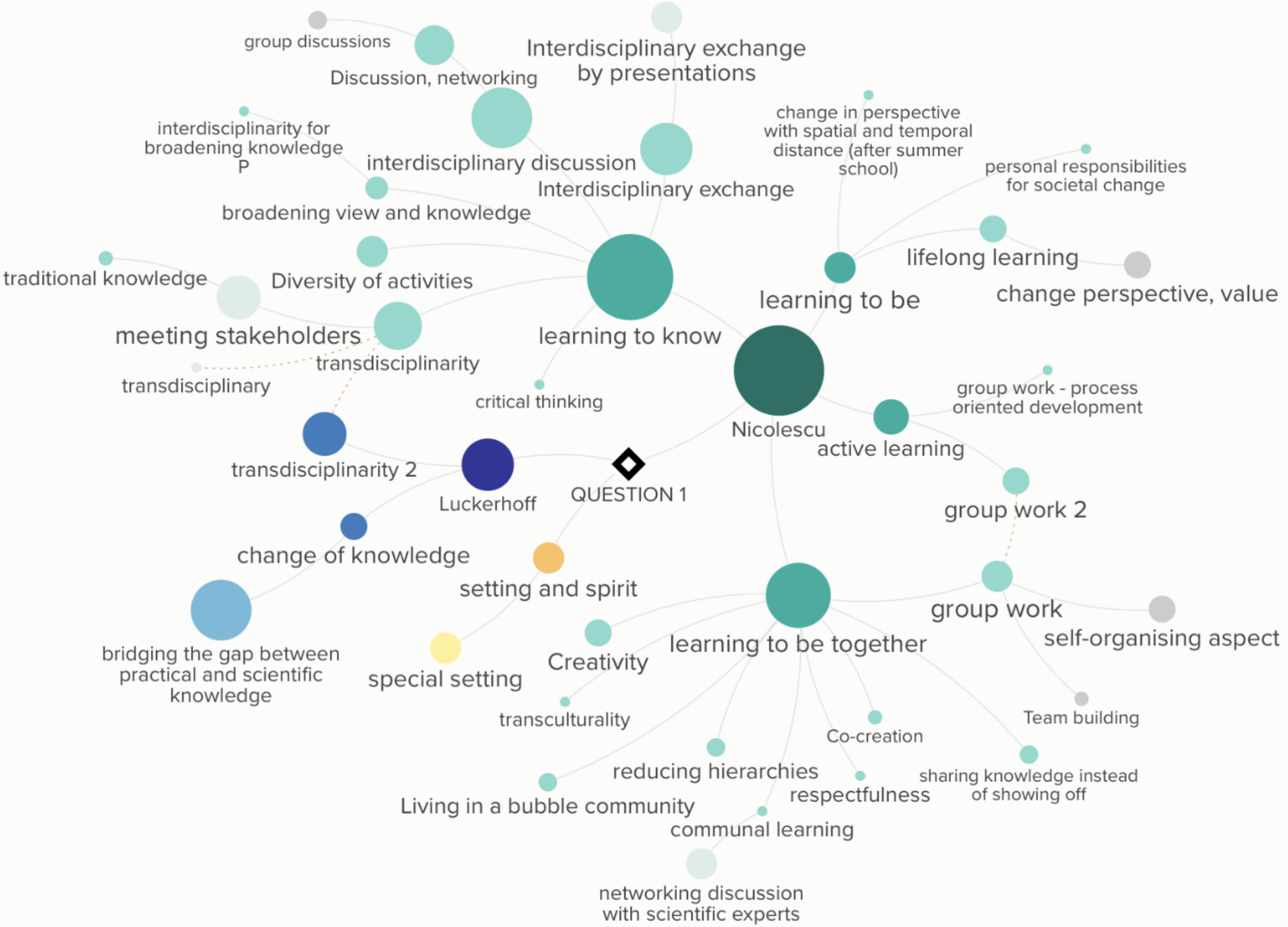
Preliminary results (participants)

Summer school as “transdisciplinary education”?

… leading to transformative change for biodiversity conservation?

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Summer school as "transdisciplinary education"?



Main themes

"learning to know" and *"learning to be together"*

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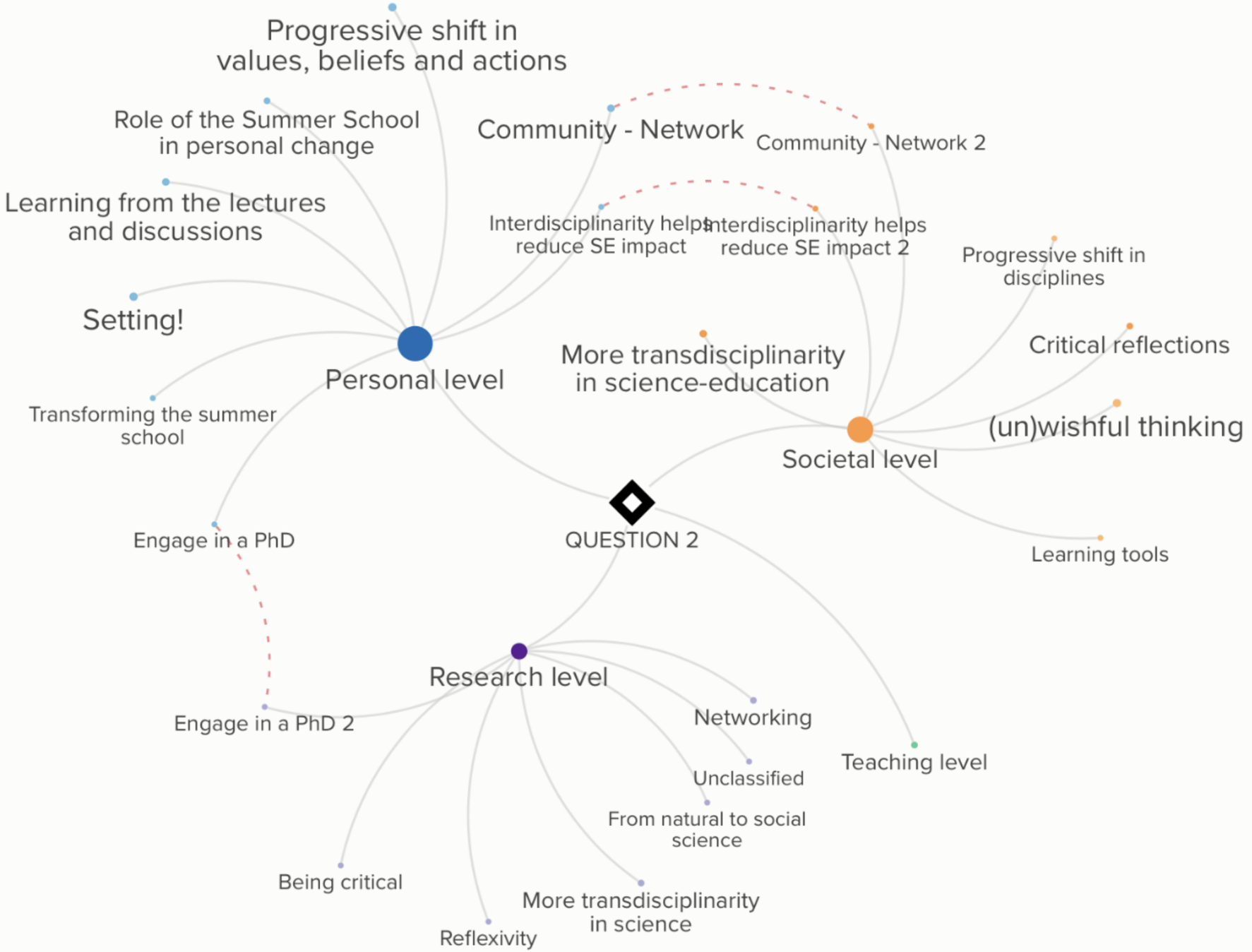
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"The creation of a new art of living came to me through the horizontal and self-organizing society that we created up in Peyresq. I guess the isolation we lived in and the beauty of the surroundings contributed to it and made the experience more intense, but I am more inclined to think that the Summer School was a blank canvas that we painted together through co-creation."

Preliminary results (participants)

... leading to transformative change for biodiversity conservation?



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PERSONAL LEVEL

“Also somehow the question of "who do you want to be/what place do you want to take in this world" (that's how one of the talks ended) is still present in my mind and I feel a little braver (it is a shame, in my case I feel I am losing braveness with age) to act on it, instead of being afraid of the implications/feeling of needing security in life.”

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RESEARCH LEVEL

“I experienced a new form of working together and with that, I have incorporated the perspectives and methodological approaches of other disciplines into my toolbox“

“The conviction that knowledge is not to be found in the individual, but that the reality of the world lies somewhere at the intersection of everyone's knowledge,
and that research processes/methods should to some extent adjust to this (new?) representation of knowledge.“

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SOCIETAL LEVEL

“I also felt very inspired to stop being passive and become an active activist (if that is possible). Sometimes we tend to think that as scientists we need to be neutral all the time, and we were shown that our research does not need to be compromised by our activism.”

First conclusions

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- important themes were identified (“learning to know”, “learning to be together”)
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- stronger focus on research and personal level (not societal)
- mostly indirect changes were mentioned (“critical thinking”, “interdisciplinary perspectives”, “participants as spreaders”)
- also doubts expressed if clear benefits from educational events / for biodiversity conservation can be determined

Thank you!

“.. well, does the educational experience of the Summer School lead to transformative change for biodiversity conservation? I, mean, I sure hope that it does!!”

