

Time for Speed Dating to Extend the Reach and Influence of Operations Research?

Gabriele Bammer

Research School of Population Health, The Australian National University

Operations research is one of a suite of approaches for tackling complex real-world problems. Others include action research, inter- and trans-disciplinarity, integrated assessment, post-normal science, implementation science, systemic intervention, sustainability science and team science. There are varying degrees of overlap between these approaches in terms of problem framing and methods employed. Each approach has an associated community of practice and these communities are largely separate. There are also many researchers tackling complex problems in environment, population health, security and other areas, who do not identify with any of these communities. The result is fragmentation and marginalization, along with relatively low power and influence compared with other areas of academic endeavour.

Combining forces could lead to an intellectually vibrant college of peers with considerable clout. I have developed a framework which provides a basis for discussion of commonalities and differences between approaches and which could, in time, also provide an underpinning discipline of Integration and Implementation Sciences (or I2S). The framework encompasses three domains: 1) synthesizing disciplinary and stakeholder knowledge, 2) understanding and managing diverse unknowns and 3) providing integrated research support for policy and practice change. Each domain is fleshed out with five questions: For what and for whom? Of what? How? Context? Outcomes?

This seminar will be a first speed date to introduce the framework, suggest ways to overcome fragmentation and learn where operations research sees itself to be.

Brief bio

Gabriele Bammer is a professor in the Research School of Population Health at The Australian National University (ANU). She is an ANU Public Policy Fellow, an inaugural Fulbright New Century Scholar alumna and has held visiting appointments at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government (2001-14), ETH-Zurich and the Universitaet fuer Bodenkultur in Vienna. From 2007-2013 she was the convenor of the ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security's Integration and Implementation research program. In 2015 she co-convened (with Michael Smithson) an edX Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on 'Ignorance!'. Her books include *Disciplining Interdisciplinarity: Integration and Implementation Sciences for Researching Complex Real-World Problems* (author, 2013), *Change! Combining analytic approaches with street wisdom* (editor, 2015), *Research Integration Using Dialogue Methods* (co-author, 2009), and *Uncertainty and Risk: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (co-editor, 2008).