

Breaking out of the bubble – Teaching and Dissemination of Regional Science

We regional scientists are well trained to share the results of our research through journal publications, book projects, and conference presentations. This discussion among the scientific community is important. But, how do we communicate the results of our research to people and institutions outside of the scientific community, to students, decision makers, the general public? What techniques do we use for this communication? Which ones work? Which ones do not work? How do we cope with the changing communication infrastructure in our teaching and in dissemination?

Although these questions have rarely been discussed in ERSA congresses, we are convinced that they are important for the development of our discipline. Recent political developments like the “migration crisis” and the Brexit (among others) demonstrate on the one hand the dramatic lack and on the other hand the urgent need of basic regional science knowledge in the discourse in many of our societies. With this special session we want to introduce this topic to the ERSA congresses.

Most of our curricula are research-driven that is why this close link between teaching and research offers an opportunity to rethink the dissemination process. Research dissemination is an essential part of academic work and undergoes a continuous transition. At the same time, teaching today is quite different compared to teaching approaches in the past, partially because of digitalization, which offers new opportunities for both students and lecturers. Modern information and communication technologies allow to link academic content quite easily with real world content and to contrast it. Simultaneously, it challenges researchers and lecturers to create this real world linkage pro-actively. There are also new forms of research becoming more prominent like participatory or transdisciplinary research as well as citizen research, which demand a more open research process and the inclusion of non-academic knowledge and experience. These new forms incorporate the idea of dissemination already before starting the research. Therefore, we would like to include a broad variety of different applications and experiences (coming either from research or from new teaching practices, e.g. flipped classrooms, blended learning, using video material for different teaching purposes).

Because of the experimental component contained in this special session topic, we intend to use a slightly different format than the usual series of paper presentations. We plan to put more emphasis on discussion and stimulate this discussion with short presentations. Time should be allocated about equally to these two elements.

At the moment we plan only for one session. However, if we find enough interest among colleagues, it may make sense to allocate the two sub-topics (“teaching” and “dissemination”) to two separate sessions.