

*Towards reinvigorating human inquiry and critique, and enervating the emphasis on 'skills':  
transdisciplinary research as a mechanism for demonstrating the value of the humanities*

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Particularly evident to those of us working in humanities, the STEM fields have been dominating educational paradigms and the workforce for some time now, slowly widening the divide between STEM and humanities while simultaneously compressing the appeal of a humanities education. Though humanistic, nontechnical skills have recently been highlighted as essential to the future workforce (Zucchetti et al. 2019), they have not been universally adopted in a way that has shifted, or even broadened, the scope of educational emphasis. As such, the desirability for technical skills continues to overshadow hard-won nontechnical skills such as resourcefulness, critique, communication savvy, creativity, logical reasoning, self-awareness, and cooperation—all of which are core elements of humanities education and scholarship. Upskilling oneself from a technical perspective is relatively easy, adding on proficiencies for specific programs or tools, but is decidedly more difficult in the humanities since the epistemological foundation on which it is grounded is developed over time, engaging with philosophies that are profound, intricate, and interwoven across the entire spectrum of disciplines. The 'skills' that follow mature through the continued engagement with analysis and critique.

One way our team has been able to propagate the value of humanities is through transdisciplinary research. In working with research partners in the STEM fields, we have begun to bridge the widening divide between academic worlds, demonstrating the impact of human validation of machine generated findings, the application of humanities theories, and the benefits of developing a research framework from the combined perspectives of multiple disciplines. Our transdisciplinary work has garnered respect for the humanities and illustrated its value as the research contributions of our joint endeavors have uncovered more than any uni-disciplinary effort could have. This presents an opportunity to pull some emphasis back to the humanities and continue to cultivate those human skills that may not always be named, but are invaluable to our society.