Interdisciplinary Research is

- A *decision-making* process – a deliberate choice

- A decision-making *process* – a movement, a motion

- Heuristic – tool for finding out – process of searching rather than an emphasis on finding

- Iterative – procedurally repetitive – messy, not linear – fluid

- Reflexive – self-conscious or aware of disciplinary or personal bias – what influences your work (auto)

Integrated Model (p.141)

Problem – Insights – Integration – Understanding fine the problem

The Steps include:

A. Drawing on disciplinary insights

1. Define the problem

2. Justify using an id approach

3. Identify relevant disciplines

4. Conduct a literature search

5. Develop adequacy in each relevant discipline

6. Analyze the problem and evaluate each insight into it

B. Integrate insights to produce id understanding

7. Identify conflicts between insights and their sources

8. Create or discover common ground

9. Integrate insights

10. Produce an id understanding of the problem (and test it)

Cautions and concerns

(1) Fluid steps

(2) Feedback loops – not a ladder

(3) Don't skip steps – be patient

(4) Integrate as you go

STEP ONE: Define the Problem

- Researchable in an ID sense?

- What is the SCOPE (parameters; disclaimers; what to include, exclude; what's your focus – the causes, prevention, treatment, effects, etc.

- Is it open-ended

- Too complex for one discipline to solve?

    Writing CHECK – Craft a well-composed research question

    - Is the problem stated clearly and concisely?

    - Is the problem sufficiently narrow to be manageable for this project?

    - Is the problem in a context that explains why it is important? –or why we should care?

STEP TWO: Justify using an interdisciplinary approach
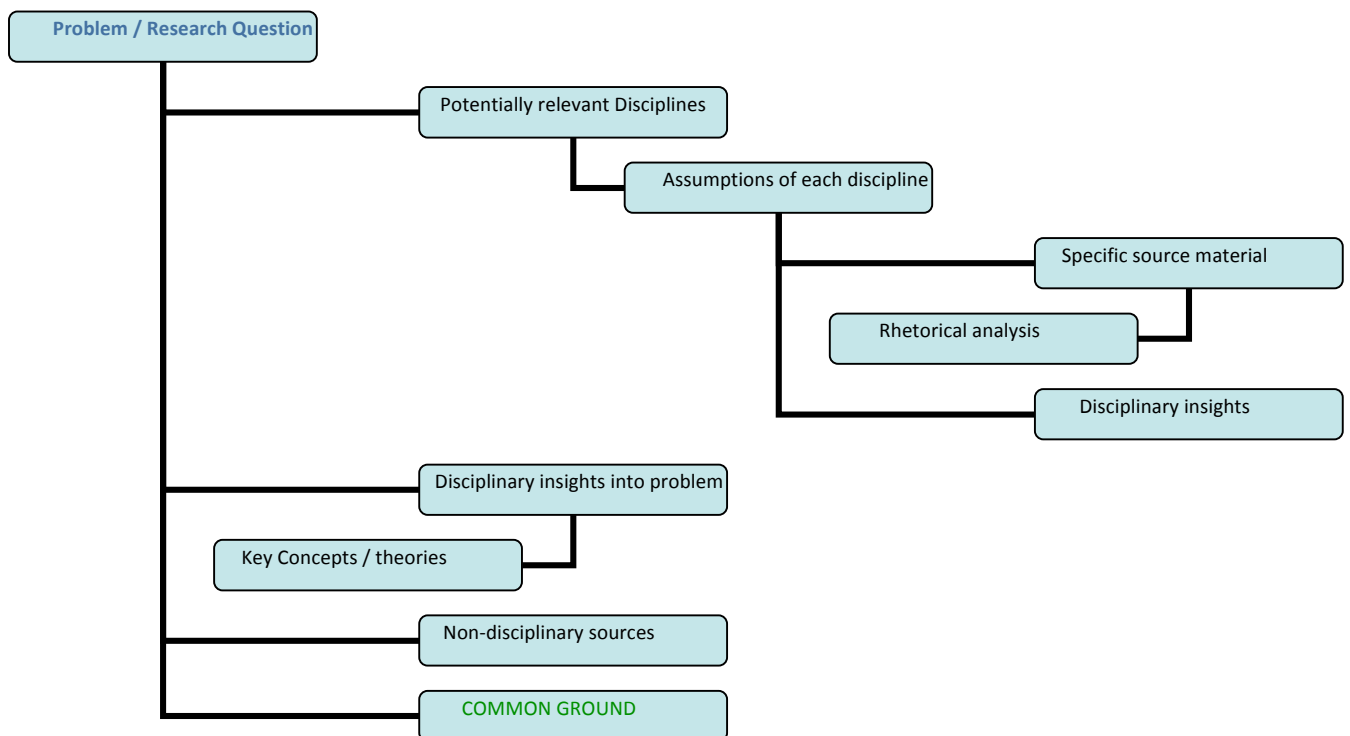
5 common criteria used by interdisciplinarians: (p, 151)

(1) The problem is complex

(2) Important insights into the problem is offered by two or more disciplines

(3) No single discipline has been able to address the problem comprehensively

(4) The problem is at the interfaces of disciplines (disciplines share a point of common interest in the problem)

(5) The problem is an unresolved societal need or issue

    Writing CHECK –Identify and try to justify which disciplines might be well-suited for exploring this problem

STEP THREE: Identify relevant disciplines and choose the most relevant to the problem

(1) Map the PROBLEM

(2) List potential disciplines

(3) Map the PROCESS – conduct a preliminary search of literature to see which disciplines have published scholarly research on an aspect of the problem. What are the research steps and the relationships of the steps?

```
Problem / Research Question
    │
    ├──────── Potentially relevant Disciplines
    │                  │
    │           Assumptions of each discipline
    │                  │
    │                  ├──────────── Specific source material
    │                  │                    │
    │                  │           Rhetorical analysis
    │                  │                    │
    │                  └──────────── Disciplinary insights
    │
    ├──────── Disciplinary insights into problem
    │                  │
    │     Key Concepts / theories
    │
    ├──────── Non-disciplinary sources
    │
    └──────── COMMON GROUND
```

Writing Check

- o Write an annotated bibliography of each key source

    - ▪ FULL CITATION

    - ▪ Summary of article (2-3 sentences)

    - ▪ Evaluation of ideas (3-4 sentences)

    - ▪ Research log

STEP FOUR: Conduct a Literature Search

Purposes for ID work:

- Saves time by revealing what is already known about the problem

- Narrows topic – helps focus research question

- Understand historical, cultural, political, social background of the problem – its varied contexts

- Situates or contextualizes the problem

- Shows paths of prior disciplinary research

- Demonstrates familiarity – enables you to "enter the ongoing conversation"

- Identifies relevant disciplines

Initial phase:

- Identify the potentially relevant disciplines

- Find and read sources to get insights and an overview of the problem

- Read cursorily – skimmingly in a few different disciplines

- Narrow your topic – scope of the problem

Writing Check

- Reflect on the problem, your impressions of the problem from the literature you have read, and justify an interdisciplinary approach;

- Revise your research question and your specific literature review question/focus;

- Conduct close reading of your key sources;

- Use the literature search chart below to identify points of analysis.

Literature Search Chart

	Rhetorical Elements	Key concepts/terms/theories	Disciplinary insights	Issues that divide
Source 1				
Source 2				
Source 3				
Source 4				

Common Ground
Areas of conflict

Draft your literature review essay – a critical synthesis of key concepts and insights from your sources as relevant to your problem / research question.

STEP FIVE: Develop adequacy in each relevant discipline

For your research purposes, rather than developing "adequacy" in each relevant discipline, we would like you to develop a keen "awareness" of what disciplines entail. Remember from earlier Repko chapters that each discipline includes these elements: phenomena, assumptions, epistemology, concepts, theories, and methods. Consider these elements in relation to your research question as you move to the next step in discovering disciplinary insights.

STEP SIX: Analyze the problem and evaluate each insight into it

In this step, you will apply the discoveries from your literature reviews to the interdisciplinary problem/research question that your group will explore. We will use Repko's process as a guide, but will make some adjustments along the way. The first step in your collaborative project is to compare your findings from your literature search and determine their value to your overall research question. Use the charts below to help compare and analyze your sources.

Analyzing the Problem Chart: Overall Disciplinary Perspective(s)

Problem / Research Topic: _____

Disciplines & Interdisciplines	Overarching Perspective on the Problem (state in a "what" or "how" question)

Analyzing the Problem Chart: Specific Disciplinary Insights

Sources	Citation	Discipline(s)	Disciplinary Insight(s)	Method(s)
Source 1				
Source 2				
Source 3				
Source 4				
Source 5				
Source 6				
Source 7				
Source 8				
Source 9				
Source 10				
Source 11				
Source 12				

NOTE: see Repko pages 238-240 for kinds of Methods. (Experiments, surveys, statistical analysis, content or textual analysis, participant observation or ethnographic fieldwork, interview, case study.)

STEP SEVEN: Identify conflicts between insights and locate their sources

STEP EIGHT: Creating Common Ground

Chapter 11 is devoted to strategies and techniques for creating common ground as a way toward interdisciplinary integration. As you read through the Chapter, focus your attention on these questions below.

1. How does Repko define "Common Ground?"

2. On page 273 Repko introduces the term, "interdisciplinary communication." What does this mean? How might an understanding of other terms, such as "intercultural communication" shed light on your understanding?

3. Repko gives an example of common ground using the story of Helen Keller (on page 275). Can you explain this example?

4. On page 276, Repko argues that "Creating common ground is like building a bridge in order to span a deep chasm." Explain the metaphor to it fullest potential. Draw it out if you are visually inclined.

5. On page 280, Repko argues that disciplinary insights are what get integrated and not disciplinary perspective. Why does he make such a stink about this? Do you agree with his ideas?

STEP NINE: Integrate Insights

STEP TEN: Produce an interdisciplinary understanding of the problem and test it