

Chapter 15

How Can the Media Competence of Students in University Learning Settings be Developed and Fostered?

A Case of Learning by Designing

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on the “learning by designing” approach, this chapter illustrates how media competence can be developed, what didactic design is necessary, and what features this design possesses for teaching media competence in university. The “Natural History Museum Berlin project” is used as an example of this. In this project, during the 2009 summer term, students of the Carl von Ossietzky Universität in cooperation with the Natural History Museum Berlin developed media products (magazine articles, audio and video podcasts) in which they explored and reflected on the topic of “knowledge transfer” in terms of constructivism in an authentic context. The closeness to research activities at the university, and especially at the Department of Continuing Education and Education Management, is one of the essential aspects.

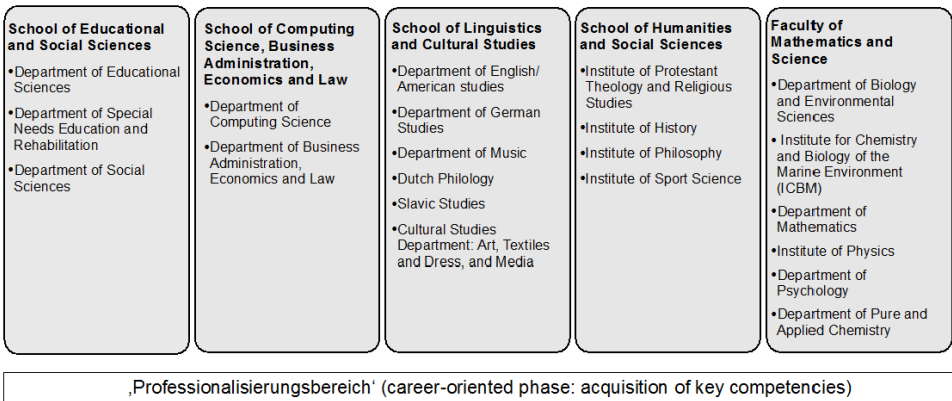
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ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The Carl von Ossietzky Universität that emerged from the teacher training college Pädagogische Hochschule Oldenburg in 1973 is one of Germany's younger universities. Today it has achieved a profile as a medium-sized, interdisciplinary university, with study programs geared to research and spearheading new and existing priorities in interdisciplinary cutting-edge research. It excels in teaching using research and interdisciplinarity as its focus and lifelong learning as its education mandate. There are currently 11,000 students at the Carl von Ossietzky Universität, supervised and taught by 200 professors who are supported by a staff of 1,800. University life is divided between two locations—the Campus Wechloy and the Campus Haarentor. Altogether the university offers 71 Bachelor and Master Degree courses, through 25 Institutes in five Faculties.

The 'knowledge transfer' module presented here is based in the Department for Continuing Education and Education Management of the Institute of Educational Science in Faculty I—School of Education and Social Sciences. It is at the same time part of a larger range of modules addressing students from all departments and semesters (cf. Figure 1). The module is offered regularly in the summer semester and is open to all students at the university within the 'Professionalisierungsbereich' (career-oriented phase: acquisition of key competences). The composition of the student groups is heterogeneous in relation to their primary subjects, and it is this interdisciplinary background that is a special feature of the module. A further hallmark is the close cooperation with external partners-in-practice, such as museums. All students can take advantage of such cross-subject and interdisciplinary study offerings during their studies and obtain credit points for these. The underlying idea is that fostering key competences and meta-competences, such as those promoted

Figure 1. Role of the "professionalisierungsbereich" within the university structure



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