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Multi-angular Didactics in University Teaching

Creation of Teaching-Learning Situations based on the Example of an Intercultural Project

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Introduction

In 2018, the state-accredited private University of Applied Sciences for Communication and Design (in German: Hochschule für Kommunikation und Gestaltung, HfK+G) was awarded funding for its project proposal »together. Communication and Design for Intercultural Understanding«.

The encounter of two heterogeneous groups of students in the framework of the project *together* took place in the horizon of a phase of already obvious political upheaval in Europe. The division into pro-democracy and nationalist camps, which can be observed not only in European societies, began to challenge the post-war construction of democracy. Accordingly, the project *together* with cooperation partners in the Danube region was intended to make a university-specific contribution to international understanding and democratic development.

With regard to the actors themselves, the narrower objectives consisted of conceptualising and testing innovations in teaching in the subject areas of internationality and intercultural understanding through the interlocking of the study areas of communication and design. Students from Germany and partner universities from abroad were to work repeatedly on local-specific issues in Germany and in the partner countries over a period of three years. In the funding application of 01 February 2018 within the framework of the call for proposals »Non-Governmental Higher Education Institutions« of the State of Baden-Württemberg, the University of Applied Sciences for Communication and Design (HfK+G) outlined a concept with five phases as the basic pattern of the workshops: 1) contextualisation, 2) analysis, 3) brainstorming, strategy development and conception, 4) prototyping and 5) presentation, feedback and conclusion.

This defined the overall goals and the form from an initially vague perspective. The initial planning meeting finally took place in autumn 2018 with representatives from the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek (Croatia) and the University of Pécs (Hungary), at which the foundations were laid for the bilateral workshops in Germany and abroad. What was missing was a more precise definition of the thematic content that the students were to deal with in that targeted »intercultural understanding«. At least, two alternative concept proposals (»Times out of Joint. Re-invent the Game of Democracy« and »Identity«) were discussed in the kick-off event with the representatives of the partner universities—Vladimir Frelih (Osijek) and Ádám Guld (Pécs). These are presented consecutively in Chapter 1.

Introduction

In the course of the project it became increasingly apparent that the interdisciplinarity between the two bachelor's degree programmes *Communication Design* (CD) and *Advertising and Market Communication* (AMC) of the University of Applied Sciences for Communication and Design often proved to be difficult in practice, which is related to the requirement of the curricular integration of the workshops as planned in the funding application at the time. The two degree programme increasingly took their own paths towards fulfilling the promise of an innovative teaching concept formulated in the project application. This is an interesting phenomenon in itself because it documents, so to speak, »intercultural challenges« between the study programmes of a German university itself. The contents of the degree programmes often proved to be incompatible with each other in practical terms, so that a certain division of labour to contribute to the project between the degree programmes became unavoidable.

The following report therefore separately presents the development of the teaching concept aimed at in the funding application *from the perspective of the AMC degree programme*, which is explained in more detail in the 2nd chapter. Nevertheless, the conception of teaching gained in the »Communication« department of the AMC degree programme, and in particular the creation of multi-angular teaching-learning situations, has validity beyond the degree programme. In Chapter 3, the content-related dimensions of a fruitful intercultural communication are first determined and then, in Chapter 4, related to the curricular (lecture internal to the AMC degree programme and interdisciplinary meetings with CD) and non-academic learning situations (e-learning course and workshop) specific to the AMC degree programme.

With the emergence of the Corona Pandemic 2020, the project team was forced to switch to online formats, which brought with it new didactic and methodical challenges. At the same time, from the perspective of the »Communication« department, this provided the opportunity to make suggestions for a competence-oriented design of the online workshops. This was followed by a measurement of the changes in competence of the workshop participants, the quantitative part of which is presented in chapter 5. In chapter 6, this is complemented by an analysis of the qualitative elements, focussing on the self-reflective participant perspective in relation to intercultural understanding. Chapter 7 assesses the results in the light of the concept of multi-angular university didactics explained at the beginning.