



VIelfALT
DER WISSENSFORMEN
BOLOGNA.LAB



»DIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE«: Interdisciplinary Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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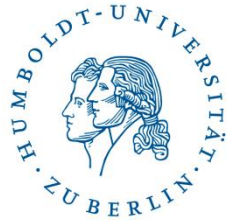
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»Diversity of Knowledge« – Overview



1 Introduction – A Typical Scenario

2 Characteristics of the Program

3 Structural Framework

4 Evaluation: Findings

»Diversity of Knowledge«



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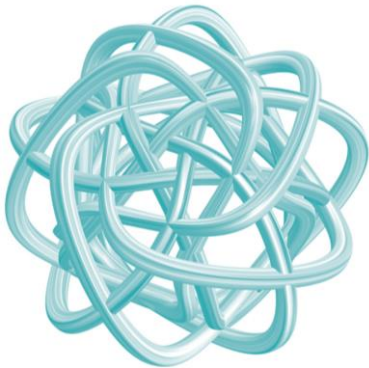


»Diversity of Knowledge« is characterized by:

- Interdisciplinarity
- Object of Knowledge
- Seminar Product
- Co-Teaching, Guest Lectures and Excursions
- Accompanying Program for Teaching Staff

»Diversity of Knowledge« is characterized by:

Interdisciplinarity



- *Broad* interdisciplinarity
- Disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity as complementary & mutual corrective
- Aim: bridge the gap between the academic cultures

»Diversity of Knowledge« is characterized by:

Object of Knowledge

- Concrete object relevant to multiple disciplines
- Nodal point to explore transitions, connections and differences between distinct academic cultures
- Aim: encourage meta-reflections on knowledge and inter-/disciplinarity



»Diversity of Knowledge« is characterized by:

Seminar Product



- Group-work projects in small interdisciplinary teams
- Translate knowledge acquired into a presentable format
- Aim: accomplish synthesis of different disciplinary perspectives



Aims of the teaching format:

- Raise and sharpen the understanding of the structures of different disciplines
- Grasp the possibilities and limitations of one's own discipline
- Support reflections on disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity
- Encourage the reflection on knowledge and structures of knowledge in different academic cultures
- Challenge students to question their epistemological beliefs

»Diversity of Knowledge« is characterized by:

Accompanying Program for Teaching Staff



- Meetings with moderated exchange of experience and peer feedback
- Individual consultings

»Diversity of Knowledge«



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The bologna.lab at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

- funded since 2012 by the German Ministry for Education and Research as part of Humboldt-Universität's bid in the Quality Pact for Teaching
- serves as a laboratory for the development and piloting of innovative teaching and learning formats
- Four aims in curricular development: research-based education, interdisciplinarity, internationalisation and flexibilisation



»Diversity of Knowledge« operates throughout the whole university

Advantage:

- No obligation to fit into the culture of one faculty or a certain disciplinary surrounding
- Possibility to attract students across faculties

Challenge:

- University-wide effort for promoting the program
- Horizontal program structure versus vertical structure of a faculty-based university

»Diversity of Knowledge« is an elective program (2 modules of 5 ECTS points each)

Advantage:

- Students have intrinsic motivation
- Interdisciplinary skills and cross-curricular competences can be conveyed more easily

Challenge:

- Students' commitment lessens during exam times in major
↳ Hold down workload and have it done anti-cyclically



**»Diversity of Knowledge« goes beyond existing courses
(5 courses by guest professorship, 4-5 courses by part-time lecturers)**

Advantage:

- Courses are specifically designed to meet the goals of »Diversity of Knowledge«
- Possibility of supervising and deepening the interdisciplinary learning of students

Challenge:

- Extra cost – how to continue after funding ends?

»Diversity of Knowledge«



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Evaluation: Methods

- Evaluations in each semester since 2012
- Instruments: student surveys and interviews
- Focus of analysis mainly on:
 - Elements contributing to the understanding of interdisciplinarity
 - Challenges and potential of interdisciplinary seminars
 - Identification of conceptual elements of (self-)reflection
 - Potential future impact on one's own studies



Students highlight that interactive peer-learning:

- encourages a (self-)critical attitude
- fosters the reflection of one's own discipline by comparison to others
- strengthens confidence in arguing from one's own perspective in distinction to other disciplines
- enhances disciplinary identity while allowing the experience of walking a mile in another discipline's shoes
- helps with accessing interdisciplinarity



Typology of achieving interdisciplinarity

- Type 1: lecturer-centred
 - Interdisciplinarity is achieved by lectures (= teaching staff and guest lecturers)
- Type 2: lecturer-centred and student centred
 - Interdisciplinarity is achieved by lecturers and by the different disciplinary perspectives of the students
- Type 3: student-centred
 - Interdisciplinarity is achieved by the different disciplinary perspectives of the students



Epistemological beliefs addressed through discussion of four topics:

- Disciplinary approaches
- Disciplinary perspectives
- Changeability of knowledge
- Inconsistencies of knowledge



Difference in extent of how epistemological beliefs are addressed

- Type 2: lecturer-centred and student centred
 - Succeeds best in stimulating discussions,
 - especially on changeability of knowledge and disciplinary approaches
- Type 1: lecturer-centred
 - Performs worst in initiating discussions,
 - Least connected with object of knowledge
- Type 3: student-centred
 - Ranges between types 1 and 2
 - specific strength: enhancing discussion on inconsistencies of knowledge



Evaluations have shown that this approach:

- activates students' disciplinary knowledge while at the same time questioning the limits of that knowledge
- sharpens the understanding of different research methods and helps students gain confidence in applying those of their own discipline
- centres attention and supports goal orientation
- can develop interdisciplinary team skills by demonstrating how interdisciplinary collaborations work
- encourages the development of interdisciplinary understanding, sometimes even interdisciplinary thinking

**Děkuji and thank you
for your attention!**



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Bundesministerium
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und Forschung

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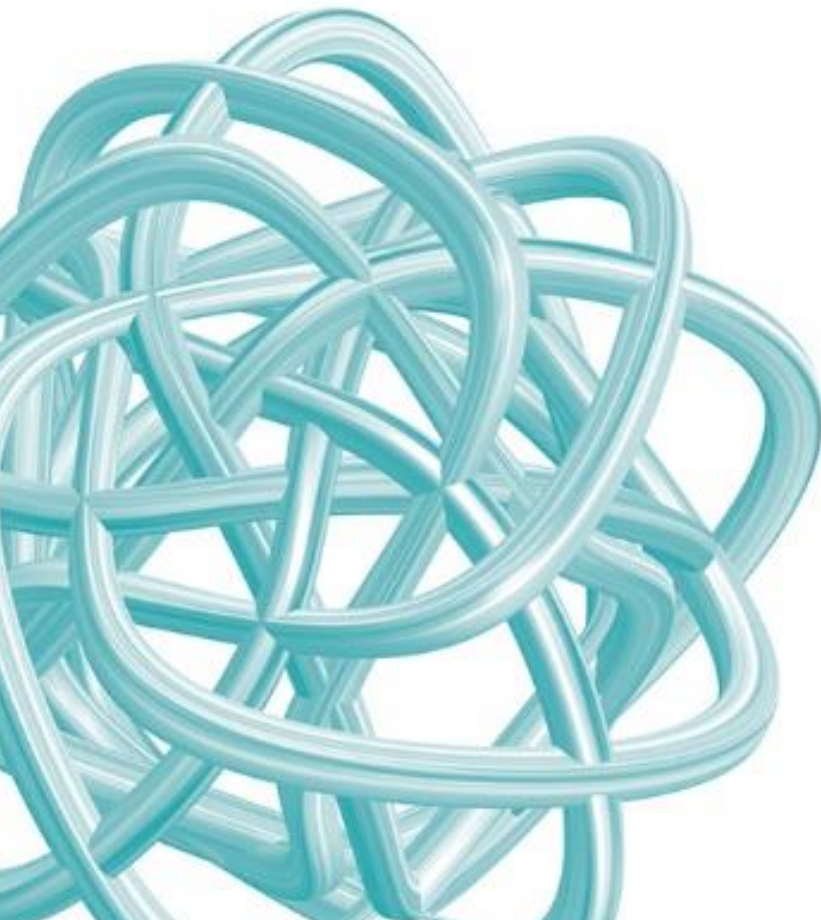
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