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Teaching^{Research}- project-based teaching as 'win-win'Angelika Hoppe¹

Being part of a project encourages students to be interested and engaged. Can teaching aiming on projects linked to research at universities be catalysing?

In the last years, it has become more important to enhance and diversify the teaching at universities. In order to improve the conditions and quality of studies, the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) [\triangleq Federal Ministry of Education and Research] has introduced the *Lehre^{Forschung}* [\triangleq *Teaching to the Power of Research*] project, of which *Lehramt Geographie Plus* [\triangleq *Teaching Geography Plus*] is a part.

Lehramt Geographie Plus – as the name suggests – contains the idea of teaching based on projects with a certain 'plus'. Students of the fifth or a more advanced semester engage themselves in project-based tasks that are to be included to university research. Thus, they get the opportunity to develop interdisciplinary projects and cooperate with various institutions or post-graduates, or to be involved in scientific progress. Each of these opportunities to cooperate offers to teach various structures, practice, and methods to the students and to introduce them to work scientifically, focusing on the 'plus', i.e. the direct contact to scientific practice. The main subjects of the curriculum are spatial planning, urban planning, protection of resources and global change, which ensure sustainability throughout the studies. In such projects methods of empirical social research are used, quantitative and qualitative ones. For one thing students develop questionnaires and make interviews with experts maintained by a manual for example.

Thus, the *Lehramt Geographie Plus* project engages students in both scientific and practical fields of work on the one hand and provides results for further processing on the other, and is therefore a valuable concept. It is a 'win-win' situation.

Such an undertaking, however, is to be constantly monitored and consulted. Consequently, detailed preparation and individual planning by the teacher or lecturer are vital to the conceptualisation of an efficient project-based form of university teaching. For saving quality in teaching, students confirm the benefits and also disservices, which will be included in planning of following projects.

This concept, realised by funding, provides students many opportunities and insight into university structures beyond their mere studies. Thus, students are not only coworkers but also part of the project and will support and promote it.

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