Accessible University Course

Developing a research-based seminar, focusing on presentation skills and digital accessibility

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About us

Victoria Engels

- Member of the expert circle of the working group "Digital Accessibility" of the "Hochschulforum Digitalisierung"

- Appointed member of the advisory board of the Information and Advice Center for Studies and Disability of the Deutsches Studierendenwerk

- Collaboration within the sounding board on equal opportunities and inclusion in the project "Partnership for innovative e-exams; project network of Baden-Württemberg universities (PePP)"

Angela Maidhof

- Experience in learning design, e.g. through participation in the project "NELE: New Learning Culture"

- Quantitative bachelor thesis in the field of learning design (impact of constructive alignment on student motivation)

- Head of Press and Marketing at ROCK YOUR LIFE! Heidelberg

- Various further training courses, e.g. didactics certificate, "intercultural competence and diversity management"

Context

- According to the 22st Social Survey (Kroher et al., 2023), **16% of students** have an impairment that is detrimental to their studies

- **96% of these are invisible at first glance** and 65% have a mental impairment according to the German Student Union's Impaired Studying 2 study (Poskowski et al., 2018)

→ Research by Victoria Engels → Success factor peer-to-peer support: Intervention to raise awareness of (digital) accessibility

A university for all?

Published bachelors' thesis by Victoria Engels (Link)

Research question:

What are the **successes** and **barriers to implementing (digital) accessibility** in **higher education** at a German university **from the perspective of various stakeholders**?

Methodology/Sampling/Procedure

☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺   (Bender et al., 2022)

8 People°

Steering Group digital accessibility

stud. Peer-to-Peer counseling

State monitoring centre for digital accessibility in the federal state

~~operational level~~

°Gender-specific characteristics are not included as they are not relevant to the research question
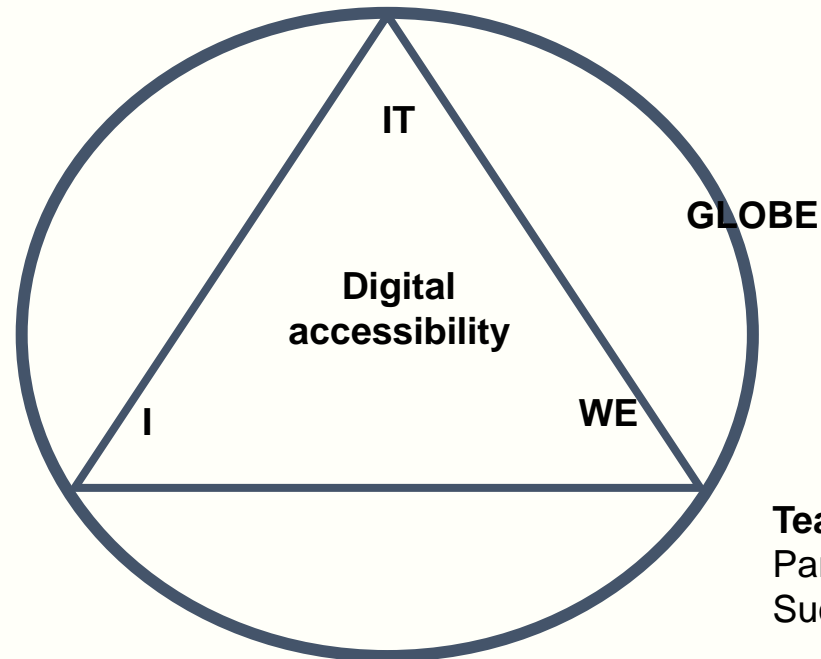
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Theme-centred interaction concept by Ruth Cohn (1997)

Teaching-learning-Input
Contents: Barrier-free design, e.g. through clear structuring
Material and technology:
The material is accessible e.g. videos contain subtitle

Students
Enable access for all:
Reflection on attitudes, positions, responsibility and interaction with one another
Teachers

IT

GLOBE

Digital accessibility

I

WE

Environmental Factors:
Framework conditions subdivided according to macro-, meso- and micro level

Teaching-Learning-Interaction
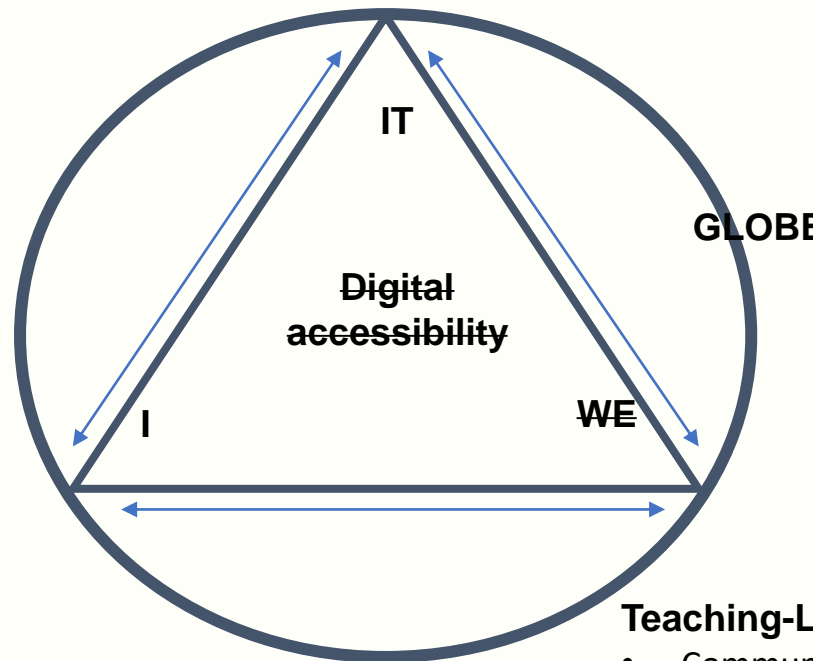Participation for all:
Successful interdependence/interaction for all

Results: Barriers (Inhibition=Failed WE)

Own illustration based on the concept of theme-centred interaction (TCI) according to Ruth Cohn (1997)

Teaching-learning-Input
- Temporary additional expenses for the production of teaching materials

Macro level:
- Challenges facing society as a whole
- Precarious working conditions in science

Meso level:
- Lack of resources
- Lack of enforcement rights

Micro level:
- No professionalization in the preparation for teaching

Students
- Lack of awareness of the problem
- Ignorance
- Non-communication of needs for fear of stigmatization
- Fear of contact

Teachers

Teaching-Learning-Interaction
- Communication problems

IT

Digital accessibility

I

WE

GLOBE

Results: Successes

Own illustration based on the concept of theme-centred interaction (TCI) according to Ruth Cohn (1997)

Teaching-learning-Input
- Concrete support offers for material and technology

Students
- Attitude-related factors
- Openess
- Proactive action

Teachers

IT

Digital accessibility

I

WE

GLOBE

Teaching-Learning-Interaction
- Communication: characterized by mutual consideration

Macro:
- level-Legal requirements
- Preparatory work at state level

Meso level:
- Structural anchoring
- Central placement
- Prioritization of accessibility
- Clearly defined responsibilities
- Recurring needs analyses and monitoring
- Implementation of digital accessibility steering group Awareness
- Raising measures: supported by public relations work
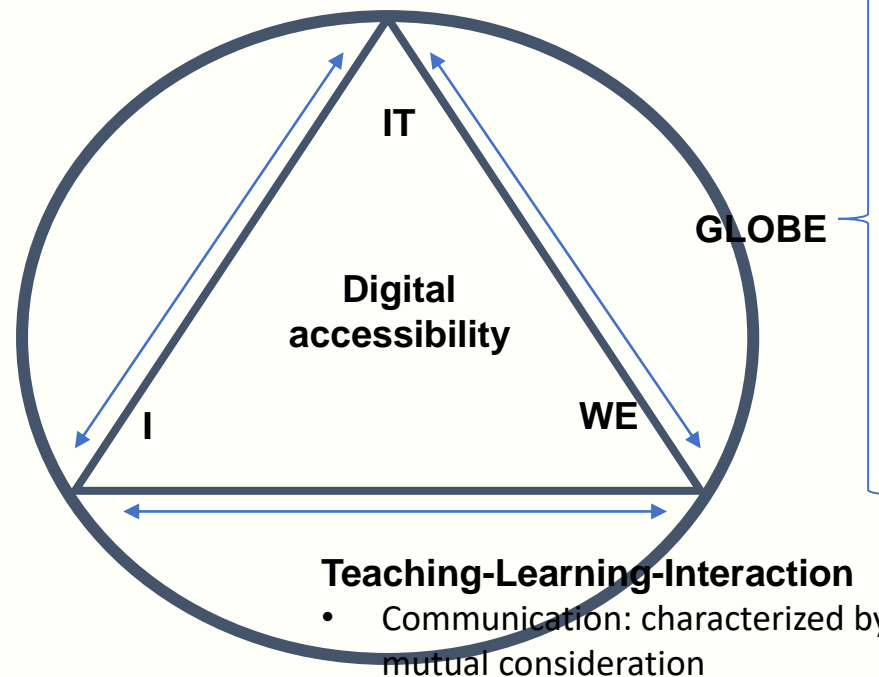- Knowledge transfer
- Personal reference/ internal view

Micro level
Individual support offers and direct help, also in peer-to-peer format-Involvement of those affected

Overlaps between the successes and the HRK recommendation from 2009

- Proactive action

- Concrete offers of support

- Communication

- Structural anchoring

- Cooperation and networks outside the university

- Interdisciplinary composition

- Knowledge transfer

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) is the voluntary association of state and state-recognized universities in Germany and is represented by their presidia and rectorates. It acts as the authoritative voice of the universities vis-à-vis politics and the public. It serves as a central forum for joint opinion-forming and decision-making in the higher education system.

Creating awareness of (digital) accessibility with a university seminar

Skill Up: Presentation Skills in the 21st century

Science

Practice

Seminar Context

- Block seminar (7 sessions of 4 hours each, including a self-study phase to create an accessible learning video)

- Proof of performance: Accessible presentation & video in groups and learning diary

- Interdisciplinary skills

- Main target group: Educational sciences students

- 13 Participants (BA & MA)

- 6 ECTS

Intended Learning Outcomes

Categories and examples

General:

You can identify **various elements of good group work** and critically reflect on these critically reflect on them during the group work process.

**Presentation Skills (communication):**

You can describe the most important elements to create a **common thread** through your presentation and are able to apply them yourself.

(Digital) Accessibility

You can **identify** and **characterize** different forms of **(digital) barriers** and digital accessibility and characterize them.

Seminar Structure

Self-Experience

Input

Practice
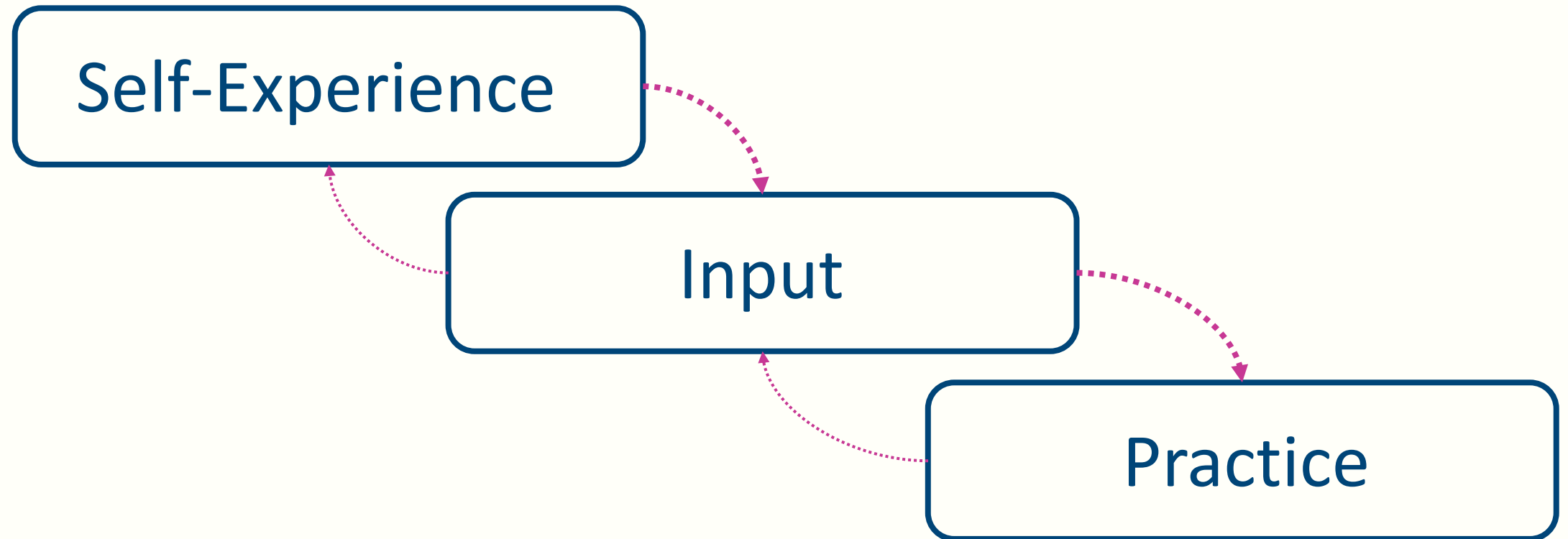
Seminar Evaluation

Adapted from external quality assurance through teaching evaluation (heiQuality)

By participating in this event…	Mean & Standard Deviation
… I improve my ability to **understand complex relationships** within the subject area recognize and reflect on them	M= 1.7, SD= 0.7
… I am expanding my skills in **cooperative work**.	M= 1.7, SD= 1.0
… I have **broad basic knowledge** in the subject areas the subject areas covered (facts, theories, etc.).	M= 1.6, SD= 0.7
… I improve my skills for the presentation / discussion / **communication** of scientific content and (inter-)relationships.	M= 1.8, SD= 1.1
… I acquire the competence to **use and apply the methods** covered in this course independently.	M= 1.7, SD= 1
… I have **practical** and **activity-relevant** knowledge.	M= 1.8, SD= 1.1

Throwback to the Results - Successes

Classification TCI	IT	I	WE	GLOBE
Success	• Concrete support offers for material and technology	• Attitude-related factors • Openess • Proactive action	• Communication: characterized by mutual consideration	Macro: • level-Legal requirements • Preparatory work at state level Meso level: • Structural anchoring • Central placement • Prioritization of accessibility • Clearly defined responsibilities • Recurring needs analyses and monitoring • Implementation of digital accessibility steering group Awareness • Raising measures: supported by public relations work • Knowledge transfer • Personal reference/ internal view Micro level Individual support offers and direct help, also in peer-to-peer format-Involvement of those affected

Conclusion

"Yes, you simply have to have the staff available, you have to want to do it. You have to put money into it. I think that's pretty simple. I don't think you need much more than that, and you just need awareness. You have to want it". (I_E5: 27)°

Students need to acquire communication skills → Curricular Anchoring

Digital accessibility as a quality feature of good teaching-learning communication and interaction

°Actor no. 5 of the total of 8 interviewees; paragraph number in the MAXQDA transcript

Literature

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