Project Work with Design Thinking and Blended Learning: A Practical Report from Teaching in Higher Education

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Abstract : Change processes such as individualization and digitalization have an impact on higher education. Graduates are expected to cooperate in creative work processes in their professional life. During their studies, they need to be prepared accordingly. This includes modern learning scenarios that integrate the benefits of digital media. Therefore, design thinking and blended learning have been combined in the project-based seminar conception introduced here. The presented seminar conception has been realized and evaluated with students of information sciences since September 2017. Within the seminar, the students learn to work on a project. They apply the methods in a problem-based learning scenario. Task of the case study is to arrange a conference on the topic gaming in libraries. In order to collaborative develop creative possibilities of realization within the group of students the design thinking method has been chosen. Design thinking is a method, used to create user-centric, problem-solving and need-driven innovation through creative collaboration in multidisciplinary teams. Central characteristics are the openness of this approach to work results and the visualization of ideas. This approach is now also accepted in the field of higher education. Especially in problem-based learning scenarios, the method offers clearly defined process steps for creative ideas and their realization. The creative process can be supported by digital media, such as search engines and tools for the documentation of brainstorming, creation of mind maps, project management etc. Because the students have to do two-thirds of the workload in their private study, design thinking has been combined with a blended learning approach. This supports students' preparation and follow-up of the joint work in workshops (flipped classroom scenario) as well as the communication and collaboration during the entire project work phase. For this purpose, learning materials are provided on a Moodle-based learning platform as well as various tools that supported the design thinking process as described above. In this paper, the seminar conception with a combination of design thinking and blended learning is described and the potentials and limitations of the chosen strategy for the development of a course with a multimedia approach in higher education are reflected.

Keywords : blended learning, design thinking, digital media tools and methods, flipped classroom

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