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EU goes school

Lehrkräfte als EU-Botschafter:innen

XR hubs as a medium
for digital European
education

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EU Education: As relevant as ever?



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● Council of the EU | Press release | 23 November 2023 10:31

Common European values and democratic citizenship: the role of education and training in the spotlight

Ahead of the European elections, and at a time when democracy is under pressure and cannot be taken for granted, shaping active citizens aware of their common values is more relevant than ever. Building on this premise, the ministers have approved conclusions on the contribution of education and training to strengthening common European values and democratic citizenship.



The protection of the values that we share as Europeans and the importance of democratic citizenship are the very backbone of our societies and an utmost priority for the Spanish presidency. Today, we reaffirm the role of education in shaping active, engaged and creative citizens.

— Pilar Alegria, Spanish Minister for Education, Vocational Training and Sport

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In particular, the Council calls on member states to further promote common European values and democratic citizenship, in all levels and types of education and training and, in particular to:

- promote citizenship education and strengthen the **sense of identity and belonging at local, regional, national and EU level**
- enhance knowledge and understanding of the EU and its history
- promote **media literacy** to help people make informed decisions
- help **newcomers to the EU** to develop competences for active participation
- promote the right of **children and young people** to be heard
- ensure that learning environments are **safe and inclusive spaces**

The member states, together with the Commission, are further invited to boost education on common European values and promote democratic citizenship in the education and training policy agenda.

This includes measures such as mobility, twinning and transnational cooperation within the entire European educational community. The Erasmus+ actions are also part of what may contribute to better knowledge of the EU, its values and its democratic processes.

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"Teachers report particular difficulties when it comes to education on the EU. As one major obstacle, many point out the great complexity of the European multi-level system (...) in addition to the highly dynamic nature of European Integration, which leads to frequent changes in names, members, procedures and competences. Due to the integration process, EU knowledge generally has a short half-life. (...) As a consequence, continuous and proactive training of teachers is indispensable."

(Oberle 2022, pp. 64-65; own translation)

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"In line with expectations, secondary school teachers tend to have more extensive EU-related knowledge than teachers at other school types (...) Male teachers show greater knowledge than their female colleagues (...) Older teachers tend to be more interested in the EU and generally have a slightly more positive attitude towards it than younger colleagues. Otherwise, there seem to be no direct influences of the measured background variables on EU-related attitudes. However, there are important effects of teachers' existing EU knowledge: those who know more about the EU have a more positive attitude towards the integration process and also tend to have slightly more positive general and performance-related EU attitudes."

(Oberle & Forstmann 2015, pp. 203-204; own translation)

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XR Hubs

What are “XR hubs”?

- XR stands for „Cross Reality“
- XR is a broad term which refers to a group of emerging technologies which includes, but is not limited to, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), mixed reality (MR) and virtual worlds (VWs)
- Commonly involves use of 3D models/simulations across physical virtual, and immersive platforms
- XR hubs/platforms/worlds/spaces etc. describe an approach in which educational content can be navigated and accessed based on 3D environments and which usually offer users the possibility to interact with each other

What could XR hubs be good for?

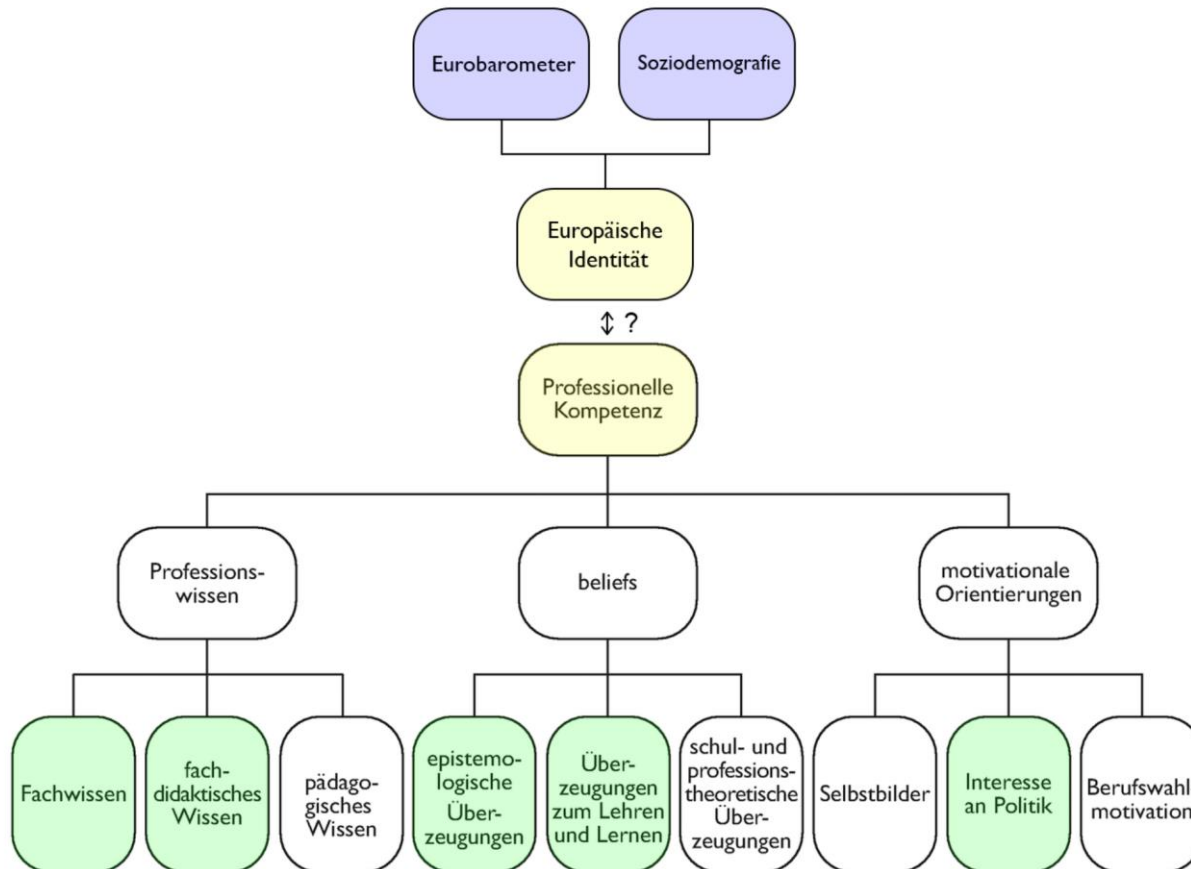
- Potential use cases: Virtual exhibitions, simulations, therapy, meetings, online classrooms...
- COVID-19 demonstrated importance of creating digital learning environments
- Possibility to visualize abstract information
- Immersion and potential link to media-consumption habits of learners (e.g., video games)
- Good experiences in STEM-related disciplines
- Possibility to include students in content creation and technical development
- Option to use VR equipment

What are potential drawbacks of XR hubs?

- Despite emergence ready-to-use tools, development and maintenance remain difficult
- Simple development tools correlate with limitations in technical options
- Acceptance and distribution of VR technology are still limited
- Gamification can lead to distraction from actual content in some cases
- Some users tend to need guidance in orientating themselves

The Project „EU goes school!“

European Teacher Competence



Component 1: E-Learning

- Knowledge together with attitudes, norms and values
 - Objective: Expand orientation knowledge and competencies about the EU through self-study and reflect on one's own attitude
 - Structure: Various learning paths that consider the prior knowledge and heterogeneity of users
 - Contents: Podcasts, expert interviews, screencasts, texts, etc.
 - Assessment of learning success: Learning checks and reflection prompts
- Current status: Complete concept draft, summary of necessary literature, completion of the hub, ongoing evaluation

Why an open-source platform?

- Cost savings: Budget-friendly as there are no licensing fees for schools and universities
- Customization to individual requirements: Flexible design of content according to curricula or seminar objectives
- Promoting collaboration:
 - Flexible exchange of teaching materials and resources since the platform is freely and easily accessible
 - Learning and sharing within the teacher community as content can be digitally exchanged regardless of accounts
- Long-term use: Open for content updates and integration of new subject areas

Why Mozilla Hubs?

- Provides all the cost benefits of an open-source platform
- Customization to individual requirements: enables integration of own media content embedded in a universally usable toolkit for creating digital spaces
- Promotion of collaboration:
 - Group entry into rooms is possible
 - Interaction in the virtual rooms through voice and chat
 - Usable on various devices in the classroom or seminar (computer, smartphone, tablet, or VR headset)
- Open for continuous content adaptation e.g.: creation of new versions based on feedback

Component 2: Seminar

- Knowledge, attitude, and skills component
 - Goal: Continuous development of teaching units on the EU
 - Structure:
 - Participants: Teacher education students, trainee teachers, and teachers from various types of schools and subjects
 - Concept: Excursion to Alsace, stage-specific didactic-methodological input by GSI staff, development of teaching units on the EU in cross-phase small groups with subject-specific didactic support, development of didactic comments on the teaching units
 - Evaluation of teaching units through multiple evaluation cycles
 - Contents: Subject-specific and subject didactic content on the EU
- Current Status: Completed development of the curriculum, elaboration of competencies, seminar implementation

Component 3: Dissemination

- Objective: Expansion of the project to a larger participant range, as well as preparations for the continuation of the project after the end of the funding period
- Components:
 - Open-Source Platform: The teaching units, including didactic comments, will be made available in German and English as Open Educational Resources (OER) on an internationally accessible platform
 - Teacher Training: Participants from the seminar present their teaching units in teacher training sessions (train the trainer)
 - Multiplier System: The e-learning platform, the seminar, as well as regular training and supervision meetings, form the basis of the certification program; participants will become "EU ambassadors" at their schools
 - Scientific Publications on the results of the project

Expected Results

- ✓ Increase in competencies among students, trainee teachers, and teachers
- ✓ Valuable input through reflection
- ✓ Increased integration of digital media formats in EU education

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