

RESEARCH CLINIC

General information

Supervisor:	Kristin Makszin
Title of clinic:	Designing for diversity: Research on inclusive pedagogy
Number of students:	1-2
Major (<i>if applicable and approved by the Major Convener</i>):	GHIS/GPH
(Pre)requisites (<i>if applicable</i>):	Academic writing

Research context

The project Designing for diversity: Research on inclusive pedagogy aims to investigate how university instructors can design courses that effectively support the learning of diverse groups of learners by including multiple dimensions of diversity. Student diversity includes many dimensions, including different learning needs of neurodivergent students; students from diverse backgrounds, such as first generation students, students with a migration background, or students from underrepresented racial, ethnic, or religious groups; as well as students with different interests; among others. While these dimensions of diversity often are analyzed and approached separately, this project researches and applies inclusive pedagogy approaches that may benefit a wide range of diverse learners by incorporating flexibility into learning and assessment. This project is inspired by the Universal Design for Learning framework, which is a framework for inclusive education that focuses on making education more accessible to diverse learners through adapting the design of the curriculum to increase its flexibility (see the approach of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) “CAST” 2023 for more details). The idea is to create space for students to reflect on their own learning needs and goals and allow flexibility to enable students to demonstrate learning in a diverse set of ways. Many of these adaptations in education were intended to remove barriers for neurodivergent learners, but universal design principals suggest that when accessibility of one group is addressed, other groups may also benefit. This is connected to analogies from universal design, such as ramps designed for wheelchair users also benefit parents with strollers and subtitles designed for people with hearing impairment also benefit people learning the language.

Students' tasks and activities

The first phase of the research clinic will consist of weekly meetings where we discuss academic literature and examples from inclusive pedagogy. This will involve a significant degree of independent research with guidance on good research practices and skills. We will jointly write an annotated bibliography and systematic literature review that maps out the existing research and reflects our dialogue. Students can learn and practice good research skills for organizing literature both technically (using Zotero) and conceptually. Then the students will design and implement a survey and focus groups among LUC students to assess pedagogical approaches that help their learning. Together we will write up a report to be shared with LUC staff and published more widely, if possible. The end outputs would be: (1) an annotated bibliography and summary of inclusive pedagogical approaches for higher education and (2) a research report on students' experiences of pedagogical approaches designed to measure and evaluate concepts from the literature.