

Kindergarten of the Future

A two-year research project conducted at the Leonfeldner Straße Kindergarten under the auspices of the University of Linz and the Ars Electronica Center will be presented on December 19, 2007.

Girls and boys attending the Leonfeldner Straße Kindergarten spent two years at the focal point of a research project sponsored by Johannes Kepler University Linz and the Ars Electronica Center. Today, December 19, 2007, the results are being made public at the Museum of the Future.

Two years spent on discovery, research and experimentation

“Kindergarten of the Future” took a playful approach to teaching youngsters at the Leonfeldner Straße facility to work independently and creatively with new media. What the project staff ultimately developed are innovative learning concepts that take into consideration individual learning styles and new forms of learning. The core of this approach was elimination of barriers to the use of information and communication technologies, which are used primarily to foster linguistic skills, sensory-motor development and abstract-logical thinking. Throughout the project’s two-year run, the Ars Electronica Center—thanks to its technical infrastructure and interactive installations—served as an external workshop in which the children, during regular visits, could perform experiments, do research and, with the help of state-of-the-art technology, learn while playing. This undertaking was monitored by JKU

student Katharina Riedler, whose master's thesis investigates the connection between the structure and function of interactive installations as well as between children's interests and their learning progress. Her study is meant to yield important insights into designing interactive learning environments in ways that maximize pedagogical value.

Cooperation with great promise for the future

Whether on the job or in conjunction with leisure activities, new technologies have long since become an indispensable part of our everyday life. And as such, it's high time to start integrating sensible, creative ways of dealing with these new technologies into pedagogical concepts. Linz's Leonfeldner Straße Kindergarten is a pioneer in nurturing media competence on the part of young users. In 1999, this facility began enriching traditional learning concepts with playful approaches to dealing with new technologies. Since then, this "blended learning" has continually been developed further and enhanced with social aspects and collaborative learning. A major milestone in this ongoing effort is the "Kindergarten of the Future" project initiated in 2005 jointly by Johannes Kepler University and the Ars Electronica Center.

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