



GERMAN DIGITAL KINDER UNIVERSITY



**GOETHE
INSTITUT**

Sprache. Kultur. Deutschland.



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I. WHAT IS THE GERMAN DIGITAL KINDERUNIVERSITY?



The German Digital Kinderuniversity of the Goethe-Institut is an innovative educational project encouraging children's ability to think creatively. The abbreviation KINDERUNI is composed of the German words "Kinder" (children) and "Uni" (short for university) is based on children's innate interest in anything that is unfamiliar and at the same time introduces them to the German language.

It provides the opportunity to familiarize children with a variety of subjects and have them explore these by playing games. Most importantly, the Digital Kinderuniversity addresses questions that children are interested in and that have importance and relevance to their daily lives. A key aspect of the Digital Kinderuniversity is its online platform which is accessible to everyone free of charge.

THE DIGITAL KINDERUNIVERSITY PROJECT HAS THREE PARTS:

KINDERUNI AT HOME

Any child can study at the Digital Kinderuniversity without leaving their home. The young students' parents can help them understand the study materials and are able to use a parent profile online to monitor and track their progress.

KINDERUNI LIVE

In addition to its online format, the German Kinderuniversity organizes events in cooperation with partners.

KINDERUNI AT SCHOOL

The Digital Kinderuniversity allows children to learn individually or in groups under the supervision of a teacher – both during and outside of the classroom. Further, it provides teachers with didactic materials, lesson plans and ideas and inspiration for interdisciplinary projects.

These events give children the chance to bring to life what they have learned through their online studies.

GERMAN

Childhood is the best time to learn a foreign language. Knowing more than one language is a basic requirement in the modern world, and, for purposes of scientific communication, German is the second most important language after English.

DIGITAL

The German Digital Kinderuniversity's online lectures are available free of charge, at any time, through the online platform of the Goethe-Institut

KINDER

The Kinderuni is designed for children aged 8-12 years (grades 2-6). However, these are just recommended ages. Older children and even adults will find the lectures interesting and valuable.

UNIVERSITY

The Digital Kinderuniversity consists of three faculties: **"Humankind"**, **"Nature"** and **"Technology"**. By playing games, children are able to advance through the academic levels from student to graduate to professor.

The German Digital Kinderuniversity's structure, contents, and methodological and pedagogical principles are in line with current educational principles, which have proved to be effective and have been successfully adopted in international practice.

The German Digital Kinderuniversity has been developed **with children's requirements and interests in mind**. The project stimulates young students' curiosity, and is designed to make the learning process enjoyable, due to the fact that it takes the form of a game, with content that they find entertaining. After spending 6-10 minutes doing the interactive class, the child gains access to various tasks. These tasks are not just based on the material in the lesson, but prompt the child to make their own causal connections, draw analogies and think creatively.

The KINDERUNI is a supplement to, **not a replacement for, lessons in school**. One of the goals of the Digital University is to demonstrate that everything that happens in our day-to-day lives, no matter how ordinary, has a fascinating scientific explanation to it. The project helps young students develop their views of the world. It helps them to see it through a new lens and supports the understanding of how theoretical knowledge can be used in practice.

1. PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The Digital Kinderuniversity incorporates a wide range of pedagogical concepts and methods

1.1. Learning a Foreign Language at an Early Age

Knowledge of foreign languages is one of the key skills in the 21st century. The earlier children start to learn a foreign language, the more likely it is that they will be able to master it without much difficulty and, if circumstances permit, will learn to speak it fluently. For this reason, in the Digital Kinderuniversity, learning the German language is part and parcel of the study process.

As they are studying a foreign language, children learn to see the world in a new way. Knowledge of foreign languages is essential in order for people to be able to understand each other in the international arena, and is also a required foundation for a good professional education, be it in one's own country or abroad.



1.2. Media Literacy

The virtual part of the Digital Kinderuniversity teaches the child the basics of media literacy. Media literacy is the ability to use media consciously and professionally, in order to attain the desired goals.

Typically, children from 8-12 years old are already familiar with smartphones, tablets and computers, which they use primarily for playing games. The Digital Kinderuniversity teaches to use computer technologies in a more sophisticated way, thus providing them with skills that will be useful to them in the future.



1.3. Language Learning Integrated into Other Subjects

The CLIL methodology (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is increasingly gaining popularity throughout the world. Many schools in various countries have decided to support this approach to learning foreign languages, and incorporate

the CLIL methodology into the school's curriculum.

This is driven by three main factors: Firstly, the empirical and experimental approach used for teaching many subjects, especially natural sciences,

is also popular for teaching languages. This means that similar methods can be utilized. Secondly, the CLIL approach emphasizes the study of foreign languages in an authentic context in which students first learn phrases and then immediately use them in speech. Thirdly, it allows students to mentally connect language with real-world objects and processes.

In addition, the integration of language study into the real world not only makes students' language studies more effective but also helps to develop communication skills.

1.4. Gamification

Gamification can be defined as the use of games to achieve real-world goals. University classes are not always easy to understand and frequently demand very high level of concentration. To make sure children do not suffer from overwork, the Digital Kinder-university has been designed to mimic a game: children can collect badges and through this advance to the next level – from undergraduate to a PhD and even to professor status.



2. STRUCTURE

2.1. Faculties

The German Digital Kinderuniversität's three faculties correspond to three fields of knowledge which a child encounters in their everyday lives – Humankind, Nature and Technology. The faculty “Humankind” covers subjects such

as medicine, foreign cultures, food, art and sport. The faculty “Nature” deals with plants and animals. The “Technology” faculty focuses on the study of how different devices work.

2.2. "Die Sendung mit der Maus" (The Show with the Mouse)

The video materials used in the Kinderuniversität stem from the popular German children's television show, “Die Sendung mit der Maus”, which has been broadcast in the country for more than 45 years and is still one of the most popular children's programs.

In the program, Christoph, the presenter, and his colleagues explain to children how the world works. The mouse and her friends, a baby elephant and a little duck, are the show's main characters who supplement the presenter's scientific explanations.



“Die Sendung mit der Maus” is produced by the WDR (*Westdeutscher Rundfunk*, or West German Television) in Cologne. The Goethe-Institut has been granted the rights to use the episodes as part of the German Digital Kinderuniversität.

2.3. Teachers

The Dean of the Digital Kinder-
university is the brilliant and
sometimes scatterbrained
Professor Einstein.



Assisting the Professor
with his research is the
Research Associate
Sophie Schläu.

JOWO is one of Professor Einstein's beloved inventions which he named after Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. JOWO is its nickname with the little robot's full name being JOWOGO.



The presenter of "Die Sendung mit der Maus" **Christoph** has the status of Field Investigator in the German Digital Kinderuniversity..

2.4. Homework

The Kinderuniversität is designed for children with no prior knowledge of German and children with a basic understanding of the language. Both cases apply the CLIL method but in different ways.

For young students who do not yet know any German, Professor Einstein and his assistant Sophie Schläu use English. Children can learn German words in the lectures by "catching" these words on the screen to be able to move on to the tasks.

If a child has already started learning German, Professor Einstein and Sophie talk to them in easy-to-follow German. To help children to better understand, English or German subtitles can be enabled. Similar to the English language version, children can also "catch" new German words on a more advanced level.



	STUDENTS WITH NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF GERMAN	STUDENTS WITH A BASIC UNDER- STANDING OF GERMAN
Lectures	In English + German words at A1 level	In German with optional English or German subtitles + new German words at A2 level
Tasks (games)	Three tasks in English using German words that were "caught" in the lecture	Two tasks in German at A1 level.
Language task	One bonus task incorporating new German words	

2.5. Awards and Badges



With completion of each lecture, child receive badges with symbols representing the subject of the respective Kinderuniversity lecture.

The “Career in Science” at the Digital Kinderuniversity develops as follows:

HUMANKIND FACULTY | **TECHNOLOGY FACULTY** | **NATURE FACULTY**

Student

Introductory video: Student

Bachelor

3 Lectures for B.A.
(Bachelor of Arts)

3 Lectures for B. Tech.
(Bachelor of Technology)

3 Lectures for B.S.
(Bachelor of Sciences)

Master

2 Lectures for M.A.
(Master of Arts)

2 Lectures for M. Tech.
(Master of Engineering)

2 Lectures for M.S.
(Master of Sciences)

Doctor

2 Lectures for Dr. med.
(Doctor of Medicine)

2 Lectures for Dr. tech.
(Doctor of Technology)

2 Lectures for Dr. Nat.
(Doctor of Natural
Sciences)

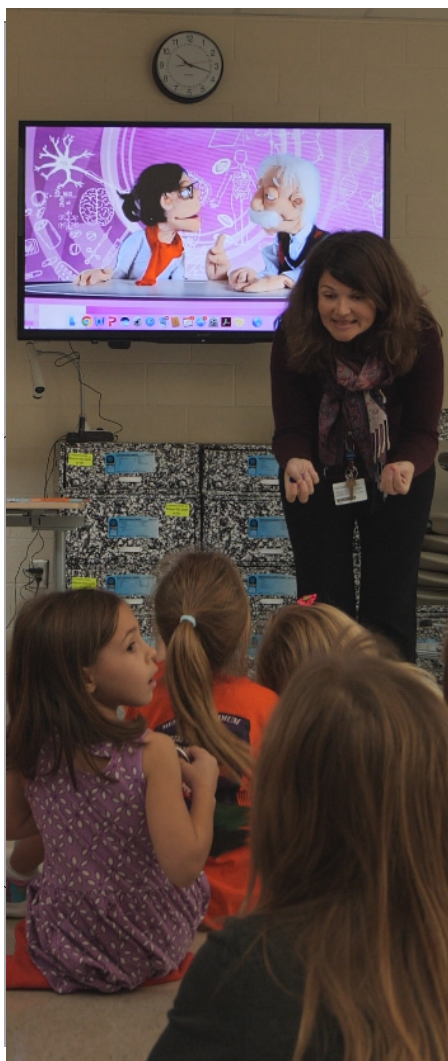
Junior Professor

9 Lectures to achieve Junior Professor status

Professor

3 Lectures to achieve Professor status





II. THE KINDERUNI IN SCHOOL

The Digital Kinderuniversity can be used to in schools in the following ways:

- Lectures can be used as classroom materials based on the relevant subject theme
- The Kinderuni materials can be part of the students' homework
- The Kinderuni can serve as the foundation for interdisciplinary projects.

1. IN GERMAN LANGUAGE LESSONS

Digital Kinderuniversität lectures can be used as part of German language lessons based on the relevant theme. The German teacher (possibly together with the teacher of the relevant subject) can also add to and adapt the materials that are available on the subject of the respective lecture.

Teaching materials and notes on methodology are available for German teachers who wish to integrate the Digital Kinderuniversität into their lessons.

2. FOR LESSONS USING CLIL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS

Digital Kinderuniversität lectures can be used to integrate subject and language teaching. The goal is for students to learn about a given subject with the help of the German language. In the German lessons, students can be taught the vocabulary that will be used in such lessons using the CLIL methodology.

This can be done either in the lesson or outside of the classroom. The content of the lectures may be used for interdisciplinary projects. In this case, ideally the German teacher and the subject teacher work together.

Teaching materials are also made available to teachers for such projects.



3. "KINDERUNI IM KOFFER"

The "Kinderuni im Koffer" is a mobile suitcase with fun experiments pertaining to Kinderuni lectures. They can be used to conduct master classes relating to a variety of Kinderuni lectures. The suitcase contains materials for experiments in subject areas in each of the three faculties: Humankind, Nature and Technology. There are various methodological options, enabling the materials to be used to teach both small groups and classes.

The "Kinderuni im Koffer" was developed by the Goethe-Institut to allow teachers and instructors at a variety of institutions to hold German Digital Kinderuniversity classes live and on their own premises.

III. THE KINDERUNI LIVE

The Digital Kinderuniversität also takes part in live events and offers a program which combines master classes, experiments and classes. In partnership with educational institutions, the Goethe-Institut plans to hold events in a number of different cities in the U.S. and within its own premises.

For further information visit
www.goethe.de/kinderuniUSA



IV. PROJECT PARTNERS



PHOTO CREDITS

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