

- **No.28**
 - **‘University-Community Links’ in California, Barcelona, and Augsburg: Developing Participatory Action Research in, for, and through local and international learning communities**

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- **Abstract:**

- The University of California has developed an international network of community based research projects called ‘University-Community Links’, or ‘UC Links’ for short (<http://uclinks.berkeley.edu>). By creating and sustaining technologically enhanced, win-win learning partnerships between universities and community institutions such as community centers, youth clubs, and schools, UC Links enables university students, local youth, and researchers to co-construct the media, language, literacy, and social skills necessary for full participation in today’s information society. To support these activities, university courses in Education, Psychology, Communication, and Human Development help students to connect social learning theories to local practices, thereby contributing to the further development of Participatory Action Research (e.g. www.iscar2011.org). Our UC Links project in Augsburg, Germany, is closely tied to my ‘Local and International Learning Communities’ Seminar, which I teach from within the University of Augsburg’s Institut für Medien und Bildungstechnologie (www.imb.uni-augsburg.de). It’s officially called a ‘Project Seminar’ because we work together with three local schools and two community centers, coordinating concrete multimedia production projects with local youth. On the university side, I meet with my university students at the beginning of each semester, and introduce them to the basics principles of Participatory Action Research, focusing on the importance of inter-institutional teamwork and designing for sustainability. After this first face-to-face meeting, I then podcast all of my subsequent lectures, so that everybody has the time to actually go out into the schools and community centers and work with local youth. For us, sustainability means putting a great deal of effort into developing long term relationships. We use ‘digicampus’ (www.digicampus.de), a moodle-like interface, to coordinate project work, reserve video equipment, share student fieldnotes, and openly discuss podcasted lectures and reading materials. Our “Begleitstudium” extends student participation for up to three additional semesters (see <http://begleitstudium.imb.uni-augsburg.de>), helping us to form ‘Project Coordinator’ positions for highly motivated students. Our website, www.5DDAugsburg.de, is completely designed and maintained by university students, while our facebook group, “5D – Augsburg”, is especially conducive in facilitating student exchanges with the University of California in San Diego. In this multimedia presentation, I start with a brief sketch of UC Links projects in California, and then discuss our activities in Augsburg in some detail, focusing on Film and Music Video production as tools for developing media and language competencies. I conclude with a description of the UC

Links project at the University of Barcelona (www.5dBarcelona.org), and our plans for starting up a new UC Links project at the University of Seville.