

Seminar “ Connected Thinking”

Summer Semester 2025

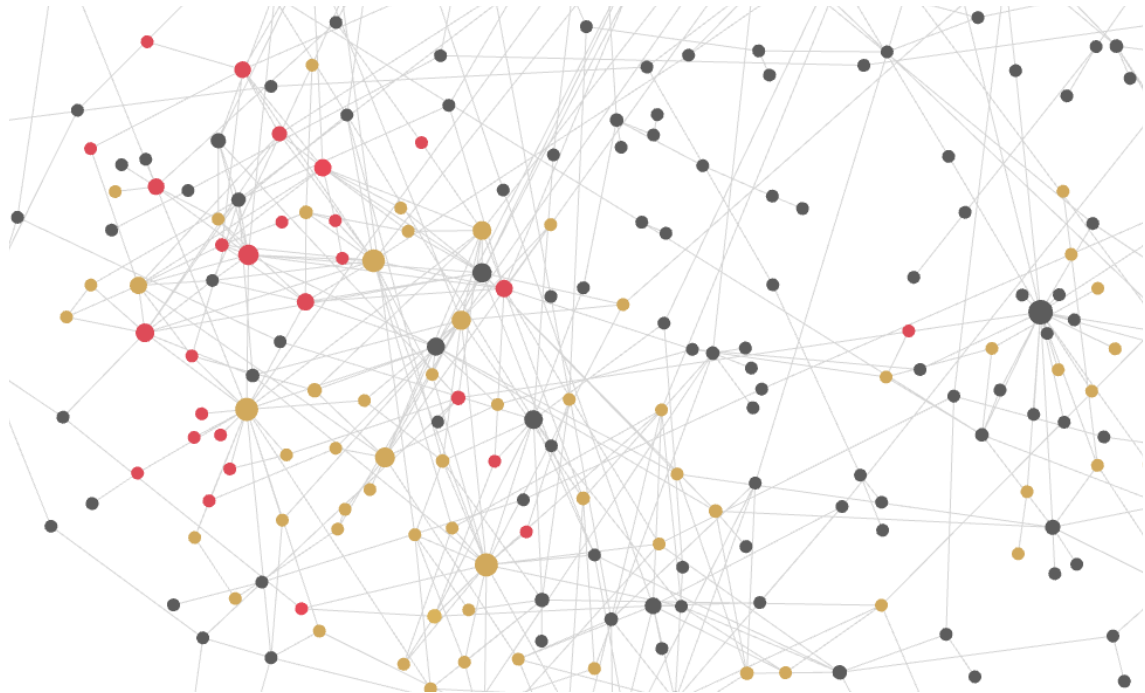


Image: Ludwig Lorenz, Obsidian Knowledge Base, 2025.

Is it possible to build a second brain? Digital tools like Obsidian and Notion promise to do this. They are more than just digital sticky notes and have sparked a new hype around personal knowledge databases and "Personal Knowledge Management".

Imagine your study notes as living pages in your own personal wikipedia, where each note links to others, revealing hidden connections between ideas. Rather than promising the ultimate efficiency hack, in "Connected Thinking" you will experimentally build your own long-lasting knowledge base to uncover associations within your knowledge that you already forgot existed.

Overview

Course title:  Connected Thinking – Grow A Personal Knowledge Base
 Teaching staff: Ludwig Lorenz
 Mentor: Maurice Jakesch
 Modus: Seminar (weekly rhythm)
 Focus: Introduction to personal knowledge management
 Target group: Students of all faculties
 Course Language: English
 Credits points: 3 LP
 Sessions: 10 (incl. introduction session and feedback sessions)
 Max. participants: 15
 Time: Wednesdays, seminar from 11:00-12:30
 Location: Bauhausstrasse 11, Lecture room L
 Exam: Micro teaching during seminar + knowledge base submission at the end

Agenda

This is a plan. No plan survives contact with reality. I will constantly update s material before/after the lectures.

Week	Date	Collect (Theoretical Foundations)	Curate (Hands-On Obsidian)	Connect (Group Work)
1	30.04.	Introduction to personal knowledge bases	Introduction to obsidian, explanation of the obsidian class template	Expectations, Current Practice
2	07.05.	Structuring approaches, Luhmann versus Fuller	Tags versus folders, dataview and queriesm frontmatter	Identify your structuring style and compare
3	14.05.	Online feedback session for microteachings	---	---
4	21.05.	How knowledge is stored in the Brain (Microteaching) Cognitive Biases (Microteaching)	Zotero and citation management in obsidian, obsidian web clipper	Which personal information streams should be included in your PKB?
5	28.05.	Online feedback session for microteachings	---	---
6	04.06.	Life Logging (Microteaching)	Interact with your obsidian vault through python Calendar data and temporal data in obsidian	Create a daily note template

7	11.06.	Digital Gardens (Microteaching)	Obsidian CSS interface, Publishing with markdown, presentations with reveal.js	Speculate about a future where everyone has a digital garden
8	18.06.	Learning theory of connectivism, hyperlink systems from memex to xanadu	Semantic embedding on obsidian notes	How can embedding be improved?
9	25.06.	Extended mind theory	Integration of large language models in obsidian	Court session on the risks and benefits of LLM use
10	02.07.	Final Session	---	---

Goals

At the end of the seminar, participants should be able to

- develop a personal knowledge base and reflect on its limitations and benefits for their own learning process
- explain the learning theory of connectivism and how it impacts learning in the digital age
- reflect on the social influence of personal knowledge systems such as the phenomenon of digital gardening
- apply tools from graph theory and computational linguistics to analyze knowledge bases

Language

Because this course tries to be as accessible to all students at the Bauhaus-Universität, the course language is English (including slides).

Interdisciplinary Approach

Every student has their own approach to studying and each discipline shapes what and how students learn with their notes. The seminar accounts for this and actively connects students from different disciplines with their approaches.

Centered around the individual task of building a personal knowledge database, students are enabled to apply the class content to their individual learning situation supported through peer feedback.

Requirements

As part of examination, groups of students will prepare and lead a **short teaching segment (microteaching)** on a topic related to our seminar themes.

In order to finish the seminar, students will a) regularly attend the individual sessions (80% minimum), b) prepare a microteaching to a given topic in a group, and c) submit their individual knowledge base documenting the seminar at the end of the semester.

Workload

For successfully completing the course, 3 credits points (ECTS) will be awarded. One credit point equates to about 30 hours of coursework, including contact hours, lectures, exercises, preparation, etc. Overall, the total number of hours are structured as follows:

- Personal study (including knowledge base creation): 35 hours
- Individual preparation of the sessions (including readings): 30 hours
- Seminar sessions (including feedback sessions): 15 hours
- Microteaching (including preparation): 10 hours

Material

The seminar slides will be made available for download on Moodle during the semester. In addition, a reading / listening list provides additional background information on the seminar's key content.

Enrolment

All students that wish to select the seminar should enroll online via the Bison-Portal.

Contact

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