

# Can Social Science be Citizen Science?

## “YouTest – Young People and Genetic Testing”

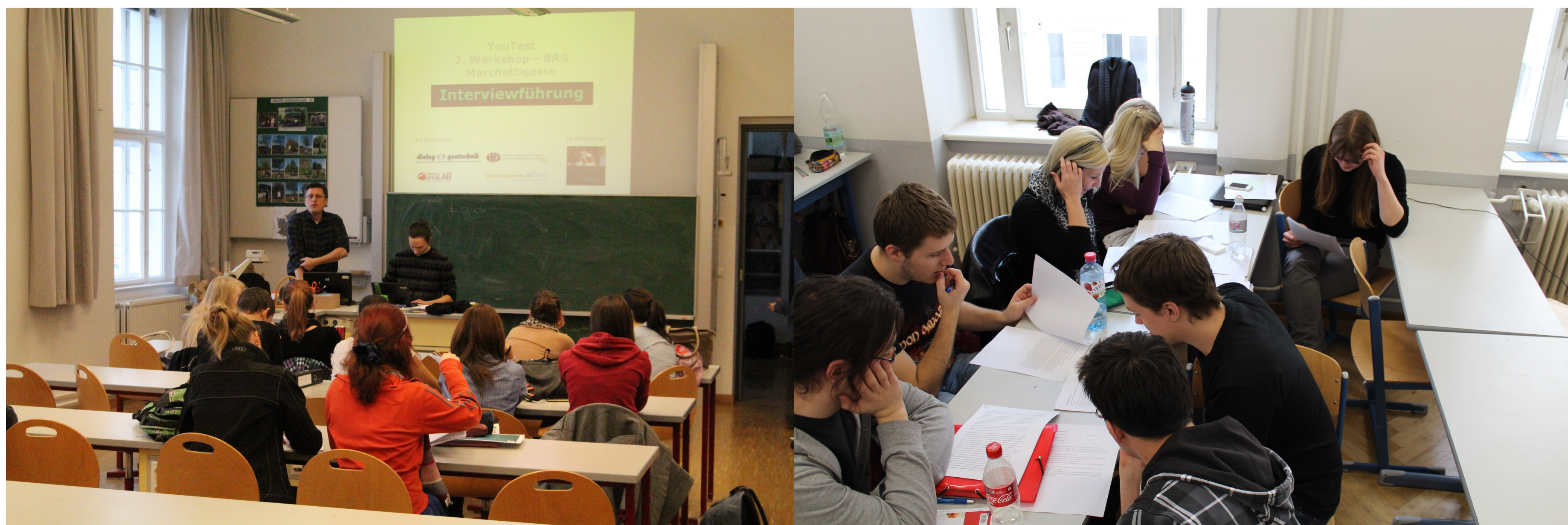


### Objective

The project “YouTest – Young People and Genetic Testing” performed a technology assessment exercise on the topic of direct-to-consumer genetic testing. Its main goal was to support young

people in critically reflecting a new technology and forming their opinion about this controversial subject by actively conducting research and generating social science data.

Employing – as much as possible given the constraints of the school year structure – deep Citizen Science, the students participated in the whole research cycle.



### Methods employed

► Workshop settings

► playDECIDE

► WebQuest (guided internet research)

► World Café

► Qualitative guideline-based expert interviews

► Qualitative thematic interview analysis

► Survey via questionnaire

### Framework conditions

- Structure of the school year and school curriculum were framework conditions of the project
- DECIDE game and WebQuest helped students to get an overview of the topic
- Students developed their research questions within the given topic of DTC genetic testing and selected methods to address them in group work
- Researchers guided students in project design and collection of data
- Project team supported data collection and exemplary data analysis
- Reflexive research process
- peer-to-peer dissemination of results to other school classes in a final event

### Project design

Workshops seemed to be most viable to fit into the school year structure and leave enough time for focused work:

- Kick-Off: introduction of project and topic, formulation of first research interests
- WS 1: development of research questions and selection of research method
- WS 2: methodological briefing and development of interview guidelines
- Data gathering phase: qualitative interviews, questionnaires, internet research
- WS 3: exemplary data analysis and interpretation
- Final WS: preparation of project results and peer-to-peer dissemination

### Challenges

- Different preconditions in different school forms/classes/age groups
- Implementation within the constraints of a school curriculum and the realities of school requirements (exams, homework)
- Keeping up the motivation of students to dedicate time and effort across the whole school year
- Flexible adaption of project plan according to student's needs and interests
- Need for motivated and supportive teachers
- Qualitative social science methods are time consuming

### Suggestions

- Integration of the project into the school curriculum as mandatory part of subject(s)
- Alternatively, offer as voluntary elective course in order to have interested students
- Connection to prescientific paper that is part of graduation as incentive for participation



Funded by:



#### Project Team

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