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**Abstract**

Based on Nonaka's knowledge spiral, this paper examines how processes of knowledge creation contribute to success in academia. It presents the outcomes of an in-depth exploration of the workings of the knowledge spiral in a university research institute. The research shows the outstanding but undervalued importance of socialization processes. It also shows that, while research success is typically defined at the interplay of the individual, group and institutional levels, in the institute that was examined none of the four knowledge creation processes (socialization, externalization, combination and internalization) appears to run smoothly at the institutional level. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)