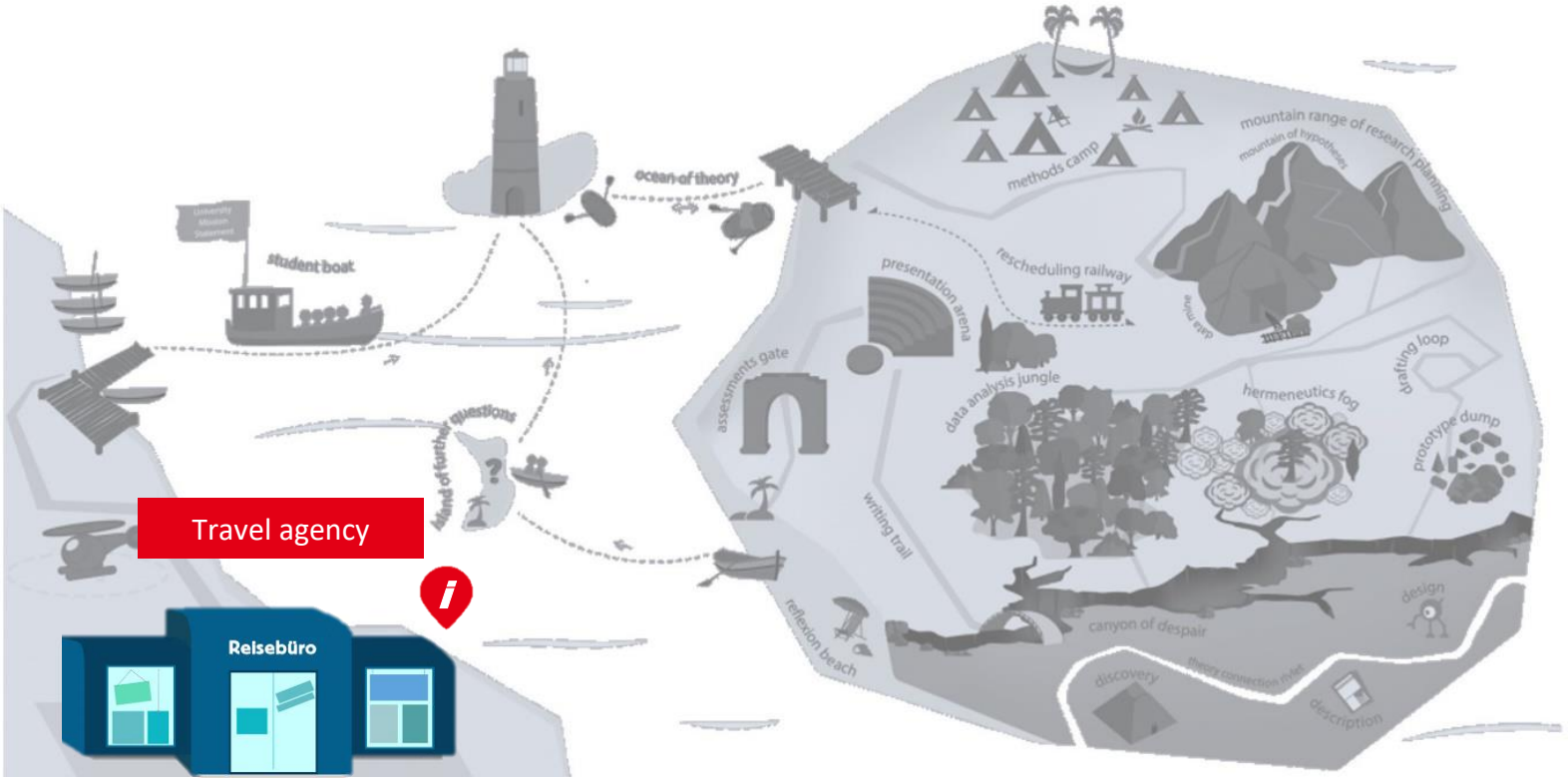
FideS
Forschungsorientierung in der Studieneingangsphase

Octopus

Vignette #12



KEYWORDS

TIME AND SCOPE OF WORK, ECONOMICS, TUTORING SESSIONS

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Universität Hamburg
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#12: Octopus

The following text sequence or vignette describes a situation in the context of a teaching that aims at research-based learning. The situation described challenges you as a teacher and may require you to act directly. The aim of the vignette is to allow you to think about what you are doing in such a situation or how you could prevent it. But you may also consider the situation to be problem-free and more conducive to learning. Either way you can preventively familiarize yourself with possible challenges and reflect upon your own evaluations and impulses for action.

The situations described are taken from interview data with coordinators of research-based learning projects and have been sharpened for the purpose mentioned above. The most common challenges in teaching courses to promote research-based learning have been selected and converted into vignettes.

Octopus

End of the course. You have to admit that you cannot carry out the project in the same way again. It takes too much time and too many resources. After all, you have invested almost three times as much hours in the event as planned. The main reason for this were the many questions the students asked you about their research process - not demanding and often rather reassuring questions, but in the end there were over 500 e-mails to be answered (even if some were very short) and not a single consultation hour that was kept within the planned time. You know that the department management very much welcomes your project and would possibly provide funds for one or two student assistants. However, for this you would need a good concept for tutorial supervision of the students in your course.

Keywords: Time and scope of work, economics, tutoring sessions

Reflective questions

The situation described above is a typical challenge that you could face if you implement research-based learning in your teaching. The following questions of reflection serve as impulses to look at such or similar situations from different perspectives and then to come to different decisions:

Can you optimise your own (analogue and digital) working methods and communication channels?

Which tasks could you outsource?

What skills would student tutors need to take on these tasks?

How can you establish peer-feedback procedures so that students advise each other?

Could you initiate that experienced students from the preceding courses pass on their knowledge to younger cohorts?

Framework for and types of involvement of tutors

This vignette does not present any attitudes and actions. Instead, the framework for the involvement and types of involvement of tutors are presented, adapted to the topic.

Create a framework

This section discusses possible aspects of framework conditions for the use of student tutors.

Training of student tutors

Before the student tutors are deployed, they first have to be trained. Possible topics include an introduction to research-based learning, moderation, dealing with difficult learning situations and research data management.

Benefit of this action: The student tutors receive a theoretical basis for their work and are prepared for a wide variety of situations so that you will receive fewer requests or need for support from the student tutors during the process.

Enable sitting in on classes

The future tutors should be given the opportunity to observe ongoing tutorials.

Benefit of this action: The student tutors can familiarise themselves with the situation in tutoring sessions and get an idea of possible procedures and challenges. In addition, they have contact persons to ask basic questions.

Organise regular meetings with tutors

It is advisable to provide student tutors with regular opportunities for exchange (among themselves and with you).

Benefit of this action: On the one hand, the student tutors can consult with each other, on the other hand, you as a contact person are also available within reach in case of challenges and can provide support.

Request a letter of motivation

You demand a letter of motivation from the applicants in which they should explain their skills and abilities as well as their expectations of the job.

Benefit of this action: An insight into the student tutor's ideas clarifies the need for preparation or sorts them out immediately..

Types of involvement of tutors

This section discusses possible ways of involving tutors.

Enable consultation with tutors

You organise a weekly question time with student tutors. There the students can first ask their questions if they are unsure about something.

Benefit of this type of involvement: The student tutors act as filters so that only big questions are passed on to you as a teacher. Disadvantage: The student tutors must be well trained and take responsibility.

Enable close supervision by tutors

Instead of you as a teacher, student tutors supervise the students. You are available to the tutors for reinsurance.

Benefit of this type of involvement: You as a teacher will be relieved of the burden. For the supervisors it is a great learning opportunity. Disadvantage: The student tutors must be well trained and take responsibility.

Organise peer-review of submissions by tutors

Student submissions are evaluated in a review process. This process is carried out and accompanied by student tutors, so that the submissions are improved in several loops.

Benefit of this type of involvement: The students receive additional input for their submissions. In addition, you as a teacher are relieved twice over: Firstly, you are relieved of the feedback task, and secondly, students may be more courageous during the process because they know that their submission is not yet a final one.

Enable in-depth work

In accompanying sessions led by student tutors, open questions are taken up and worked on, but also new ones are raised in order to gain more depth.

Benefit of this type of involvement: The students deal with the contents in greater depth. You as a teacher do not have to invest more time for this.

Enable social cement

Student tutors can also be deployed to uncover and deal with disagreements and conflicts to avoid escalation.

Benefit of this type of involvement: You as a teacher can deal with questions of content. In addition, students work more productively because less energy is invested in conflicts.

Deploy team facilitators

You can use tutors as team facilitators, for example. They observe the process and provide feedback on group behaviour and the research process at regular intervals. At the end of the course they could also write a summary of their observations for the students about students behaviour in the research and group process.

Benefit of this action: The team facilitators are providing feedback, thus differences or even deficits become explicit and the students can decide what to make of them.

Establish an interdisciplinary pool of student tutors

Instead of appointing student tutors for individual projects, you could also put together a general pool of student tutors. The student tutors are thoroughly trained and can be requested for different tasks. On the one hand, this results in interdisciplinary exchange, and on the other hand, the level of supervision can be increased, since the student tutors gain a wide range of experience.

Benefit of this type of involvement: If necessary, you can use the student tutors across projects. This also means that they do not have to be used from the beginning to the end of the project. They do not have to fill hours if there is no need for them.