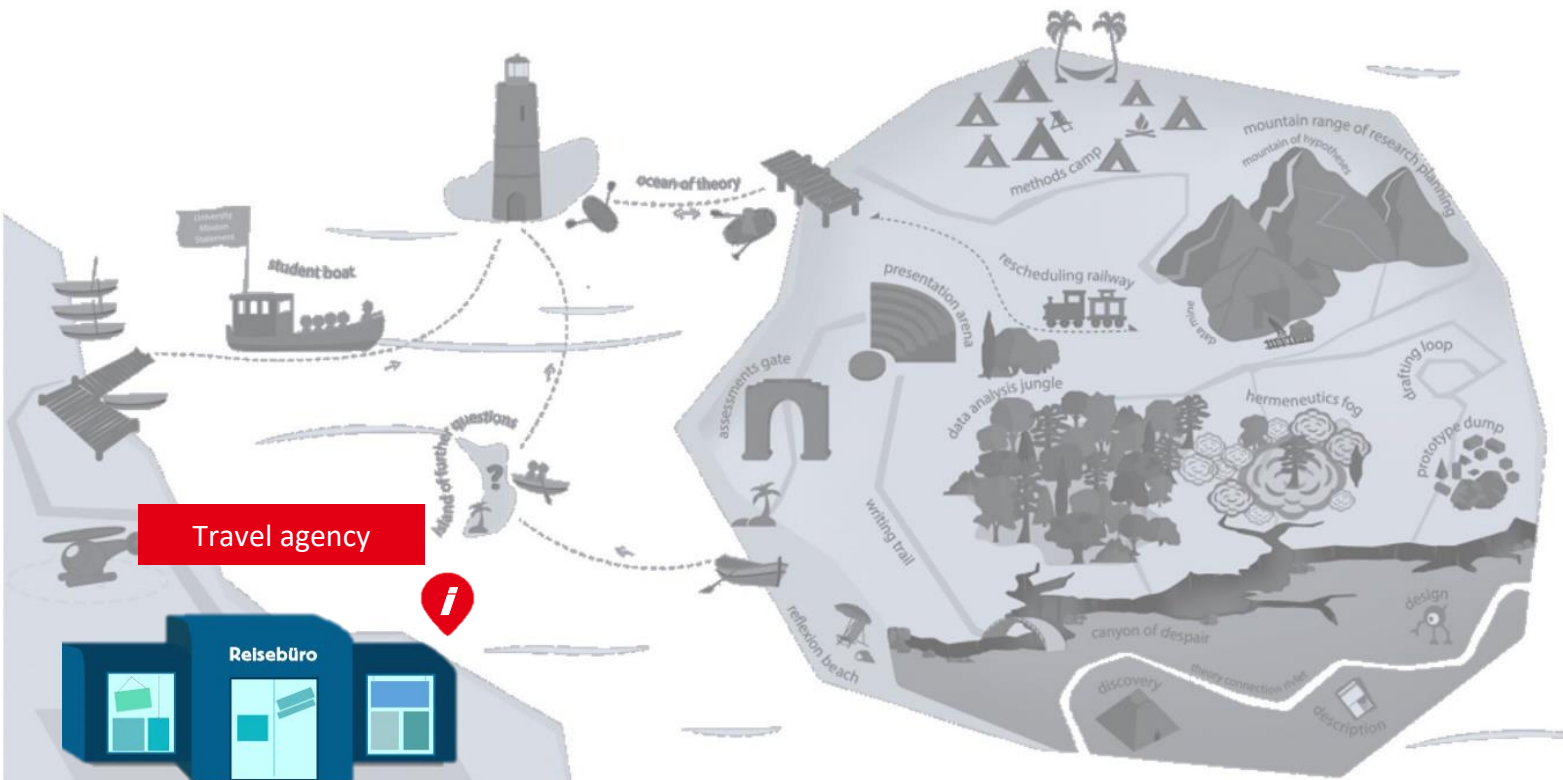




Initial difficulties

Vignette #18



KEYWORDS

ACQUISITION OF PARTICIPANTS



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GEFÖRDELT VOM

#18: Initial difficulties



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.



Initial difficulties

Start of the term. It was clear to you last term that there would be a shortage of participants in the first round of the project. But even this term, the number of registrations for your course in research-based learning is still very low. A little bit resigned and contemplative, you are now on your way home. You consider how you could promote the establishment of the course and make it more attractive for students.

Keywords: Acquisition of participants





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:

What could be the reason for the low number of registrations?

Which advertising channels can you think of at your university?

Could the graduates of last term be used for advertising purposes?

Are your course descriptions and performance requirements attractive to students?

To what extent are you supported by your university/department in the implementation?



Attitudes and actions

In the following, attitudes as well as preventive and intervening actions in the situation described are presented. First of all, attitudes are described which have an impact on whether and how to react. Then actions are presented. They are practical examples of how teachers at universities deal with the situation in a preventive or intervening manner. In addition, indirect measures are listed which involve a more subtle approach yet may have a strong impact.

Attitudes

Attitudes do not include concrete measures but describe the inner attitude of teachers (or coordinators) towards different situations. Depending on the attitude, situations can be interpreted as "problematic" and "challenging", but also as "desirable" and "normal".

Take your time

Stay relaxed. Other projects also describe that it first took time before they were accepted as part of the institution.

This could mean on the action level: Continue as before and show presence.

Preventive actions

Preventive actions prevent the situation described or rather makes them less likely. There is - of course - no guarantee of avoiding such conflicts.

Let students decide on their research topics

In advertising the programme you emphasise that you give students the opportunity to formulate their own interests and then to pursue research-based learning within the framework of the programme.

Benefit of this action: The students are more intrinsically motivated.

Advertise about people

You contact the individual institutes and subject advisors beforehand and inform them about your offer.

Benefit of the action: The people contacted can act as multipliers who will put you in touch with students. In this way you can indirectly reach students who are considered particularly suitable by the multipliers.

Anchoring the project via teachers into the curriculum

In order to establish truly sustainable research-based learning, a top-down approach would make sense as well: teachers are encouraged to implement research-based learning.

Benefit of the action: Research-based learning is integrated into the curriculum by increasingly implementing it in teaching. This means that the question of recruiting participants no longer arises.

Appear in the course catalogue

You can also note your programme in the course catalogue.

Benefit of the action: All students come across your offer when planning their studies.

Intervening actions

Interventions are usually carried out "when the milk has already been spilled". These are therefore acute reactive measures:

Use conventional advertising measures

You set up your own website, as well as flyers and posters, which are hung up before and at the beginning of the term.

Benefit of the action: The students are confronted with your programme in their everyday life - in situations in which they may already be travelling in groups or otherwise have the opportunity to exchange ideas with potential research partners.

Use social networks as advertising channels

A lot can also be advertised digitally: Social networks like Facebook and StudIP are additional dissemination channels.

Benefit of the action: The students become aware of your programme.

Offer connections with final theses

You can also offer colleagues who supervise final papers to prepare or carry them out as part of your project; or you can take over the supervision of theses yourself.

Benefit of the action: Teachers are relieved in their supervision and you have a safe audience.

