

Experiencing research through action-oriented teaching and learning

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Summary

- The courses make use of structural similarities between actions in professional and scientific contexts¹, which leads to synergetic learning outcomes.
- The didactical setting enables students to develop key competences like presentation skills or writing skills and additionally contribute to develop a scientific perspective on real world issues.
- The curricular setting of the modules and the comparatively high workload lead to a strong self selection effect.

The System's Organisation of Teaching and Research

- Teaching is financed mainly by government and in some cases tuition fees.
- Professors are researchers, administrators and lecturers, while their career mostly depends on research.
- A large share of teaching is done by recent graduates pursuing their Ph. D.

Cultural and National Policy Conceptions

- Most public universities have to deal with a high student / staff ratio.
- Bologna resulted in an emphasised employability, especially for BA degrees.
- While universities gain more administrative autonomy government funding is indirectly reduced.

Curricular setting

- The courses offered since 2009 are research-based / oriented¹ and aim at developing a broadly defined employability².



- 58 or about 5% of the Department's BA students can take part in the courses 'first come first serve' and accomplish 12 CP during the last year of their studies.
- Students can combine two different courses either focusing on a quantitative resp. qualitative approach or combining both.

Didactical setting

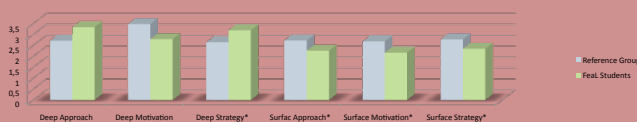
- In all courses small teams of students have to develop, execute and document a research project by themselves.
- Most courses compromise comparatively few sessions with all students and the lecturer and rely heavily on the teams individual work. Additionally the teams can seek counselling by the lecturer.
- For grading students present their results and the process of work and compile a written report.
- The courses vary in the degree of self-direction and student-activity relating the research phases.



First results

The setting attracts students with high values on the Deep Approach of Learning³.

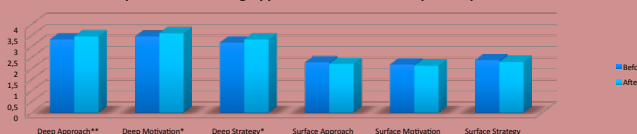
Comparison of Learning Approach with reference group



T-Test of unrelated differences, N(Ref. Group)=50, N(FeaL Stud.)=52, * Significant, $\alpha=0.05$

The courses provide a setting in which students choose the Deep Approach of learning more likely

Comparison of Learning Approach before and after participation



T-test of paired differences, N=43 N, * Significant, $\alpha=0.05$, ** Significant, $\alpha=0.01$

Relevant experiences:

- Access and quality of counselling are crucial for success and student satisfaction.
- Lecturers have to balance enforcement of scientific standards with the potential and needs of the students.
- Even if lecturers aim for scientific development mostly, students' reflections focus on personal and professional development.
- Lecturers and students alike value the high quality of interaction and results.
- As the 2 year project is financed by student tuition fees, which are to be abolished soon, continuation after 2011 is uncertain.

References

- 1- Buschfeld, D., Dilger, B., Lilienthal, J. (2010): Fostering Employability with Research-Oriented Teaching and Learning. *Zeitschrift für Hochschulentwicklung*, Year. 5, Issue 2, pp. 63-86, <http://www.zfhe.at/zfhe/xowiki/291894>, accessed: 10.09.2010.
- 2- Biggs, J., Kember, D. & Leung, D. (2001): The revised two factor Study Process Questionnaire: R-SPQ-2F. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Issue 71, pp. 133-149.
- 3- Healey, M. (2005): Linking Research and Teaching in disciplinary spaces. In R. Barnett (Ed.) *Reshaping the university: new relationships between research, scholarship and teaching*. Open University Press, New York.