Accompanying internships with Blackboard

Summary

The proseminar "Planning, execution and evaluation of one-to-one tutorials" serves as a preparation, accompaniment and evaluation of the so-called "one-to-one tutorials". In this internship a student of the supplementary study course *German as a Foreign Language* teaches a foreign student on a weekly basis for one whole semester. A student tutorial accompanies the proseminar. The focus of the proseminar are the following topics: Processes of language acquisition surveys, tests and examinations, error analysis and error correction, exercise and task typologies, planning one's teaching and evaluation thereof as well as selecting and pedagogic planning of texts and training material for the four basic skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The accompanying seminar for the "one-to-one tutorial" is divided into five phases: the preparatory phase (2 months), the face-to-face phase I (3 block courses with 4 seminar sessions each), the phase of independent teaching (and working on tasks), the face-to-face phase II (3 seminar sessions in the second half of the semester) and the evaluation phase (final reflection and seminar discussions). The face-to-face meetings are undertaken as block sessions, the phases having to do with preparation and independent teaching are accompanied online with the support of the LMS Blackboard.

The goal of the blended learning approach is to make the individual work organization easier with regard to the times before and between the face-to-face sessions. In addition, the moderated discussion forums allow for an exchange of thoughts and ideas with one's peers and to be able to discuss conceptual teaching drafts as well as experiences made during the internship, being able to reflect on these and creating mutual content.

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Course

Course title	"Planning, execution and evaluation of one-to-one tutorials"
Course type	Proseminar and internship
Department/Institute	Philosophy and Humanities, Supplementary study course German as a Foreign Language
Lecturer	Maik Walter
No. of students (per course)	approx. 12 (per course)
SWS/CP	6 SWS

Tools

- Intensive usage of the LMS Blackboard in all phases:
  - Content areas for the provision of material, student work examples, tools
  - Discussion platform for the exchange of teaching designs, for exchanging ideas regarding learning experiences, for collaborative work ideas and the reflection of experiences made whilst teaching
  - Weekly publication of teaching sketches (determining a concrete teaching goal, a short agenda plan and a reflection of the tried teaching experiment); Illustration 1 shows the structure of the discussion forum (based on Walter 2008).
- A detailed description of the blended learning scenario and the realization of such can be found .

Illustration 1: Discussion platform in the Blackboard course

Realization

In the preparatory phases before the face-to-face sessions the learning content is provided online. The students can, in addition, provide their own material. Material for the block seminars, such as handouts for the presentations, are made available to all of the participants. In the face-to-face sessions, the basics of teaching designs are the topic, all based on language teaching and learning research topics based on inputs by the lecturers, presentations by the students, etc. The phase of independent work is supervised online. The students plan their own teaching experiments in the form of teaching designs that they have sketched out and make these available via the LMS. The evaluation also takes place online. In addition, during the course of the semester the students are given online tasks that partially have to be worked on collaboratively.

Experiences made by the lecturer

A definite added value – especially when it comes to introducing the LMS in one's own teaching – is "bought" due to the quite high preparatory and time factor implemented. Assistant lecturers that only offer a course once or sporadically should not fully incorporate an LMS in their teaching. For lecturers that teach standardized courses this extra effort does pay off. The invested time pans out as the results of the seminar has shown and which is of an added benefit when it comes to the repetition of a course - especially time-wise. The internship as a whole was, on the one hand, with the aid of the Delphi method, evaluated anonymously and, on the other hand, evaluated in a written reflection and a discussion round on a non-anonymous basis. Here the students evaluated the e-learning offers provided as especially positive. Especially for the first two run-throughs, the discussion rounds resulted in very constructive proposals in order to design the offerings in a clearer manner. In addition, the unused functions (such as the calendar) were pointed out. These suggestions were taken into account for the update of the offered course for the next group (Walter 2008:4).

Further information

- Maik Walter (2008). Planning, execution and evaluation of one-to-one tutorials
- Maik Walter (2009). E-Learning im Rahmen der Lehrerbildung: Die Unterstützung der Unterrichtspraktika durch elektronische Lernplattformen. In InfoDaF (36), Heft 4/2009, 381-393.

Support offered by CeDiS

- Consulting services for the implementation of digital solutions in teaching: The Center for Digital Systems (CeDiS) has extensive experience of many years when it comes to the implementation of digital media and systems within the fields of teaching, learning and research. We offer a wide variety of consulting services on the implementation of these tools and systems within the entire academic scope and especially at Freie Universität Berlin.
- Training courses and workshops: For lecturers at Freie Universität Berlin (professors, employees, tutors) as well as lecturers of other universities CeDiS offers training courses and workshops on the topic of teaching and learning with digital media. These course enable participants to implement online elements within their own sphere of teaching.
- The Executive Board of the Freie Universität supports e-learning initiatives: With the e-learning funding program financial resources are provided to lecturers that enrich and improve their courses quality-wise by implementing technological and media-related support. All of the academic staff teaching, the lecturers or even the institutions of the Freie Universität - without the Charité-Universitätsmedizin - can be supported within this program.