

Curriculum: Community Building Course (online setting)

At the start of their studies, universities offer new students support in the form of information, advice, and orientation events. The aim of these formats is to bring new students into contact with each other and introduce them to important contact points, contact persons and study structures. Orientation weeks, first-semester welcomes, and orientation tutorials are an integral part of the induction phase in many Higher Education institutions. They are usually organized by student representatives, programme coordinators and central counselling centres. In the ENTRANTS project, the project team explored the question of how existing orientation offers could be enriched and expanded in a meaningful way.

A community building course could be a useful format to enhance students' sense of belonging.

1. Course preparations: from the course name to the learning platform.

The project team decided to call the community building-course at the UDE "University of Duisburg-Essen: "You belong to me! - Seriously now?". The advisory groups advised us to take a catchy and little provocative name that attracts students to it.

1.1 Learning Outcomes

The course aims at the following learning outcomes:

- Students are able to make full use of university services and support structures to help them along their studies.
- Aware of their own strengths, they look beyond the boundaries of their own self.
- Knowing the structures, processes, and functions of the university as a place of science and research, they actively participate in shaping everyday life at the university.
- Students discover their fellow students as cooperation partners on their path of research-based learning through university-life.
- They develop a sense of belonging to their university.

1.2. Course Structure

The course comprises five sessions. Each session takes two hours and can be offered throughout the semester. The course was offered in cooperation with the Institute for Academic Skills. Through this cooperation, the course

participants were able to acquire two credits in the supplementary area. The examination requirement for the course was the presentation and submission of a scientific poster. The five sessions focused on the following topics:

- First session: Introduction to the topic and getting to know each other.
- Second session: Explore your strengths and learn about the concept of "Forschendes Lernen" (Inquiry-based learning).
- Third session: University - an organisation like any other?
- Fourth session: Who is who? About gardeners, librarians, and science managers.
- Fifth session: Discovering the university through research.

1.3 Moodle course

An accompanying Moodle-course was set up. It is used during the two-hour sessions for feedback, exercises, inputs, and small quizzes. It is not designed as a self-study course. It consists of five sessions mirroring tasks and assignments in each session. Another session puts its focus on how to create scientific posters. And finally, information on well-being is available as well. The team used images and interactive elements (h5p tools) to create an inviting Moodle course.

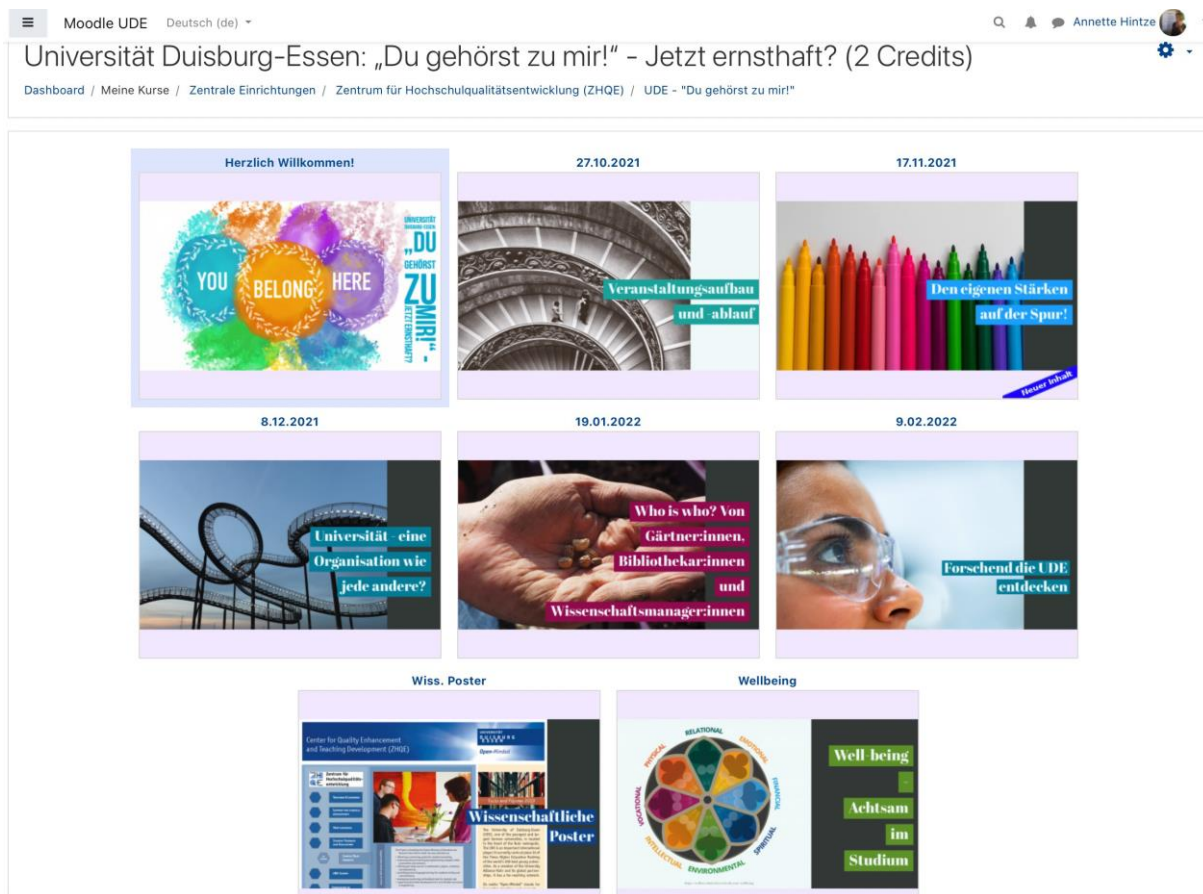


Figure 1: Screenshot of the Moodle-course-platform landing page

The project team developed the following announcement for the course:

“At the University of Duisburg-Essen, academic work is done. Learning to listen, read, speak, write and research leads to academic success. Sounds simple, but it's not.

Membership of the university starts with enrolment. This is a formality. Feeling like you belong and knowing your way around are important for successfully organising your everyday life as a student.

In this event, we will explore the University of Duisburg-Essen and give you the opportunity to be curious and ask your own questions. The first step will be to examine your own strengths and discover new ones. In the following part of the event, your own strengths profile will help you to find each other in groups and try out academic work together.

This includes input, group work, discussions and the documentation of results relating to the University of Duisburg-Essen.

As part of the event, we also invite you to take a look behind the scenes of our own project work in university development.”

2. Course sessions in detail

A curriculum for a synchronous online course as well as a face-to-face course was developed. The didactic design of the two types differs only slightly. The core elements of both options relate to the research-based exploration of one's own university and working with one's own strengths. Both formats rely on the Moodle course.

2.1. Synchronous online format

First session: Get to know each other and introduction to the course.

In the first session an overview of the course and the learning platform (Moodle), of upcoming tasks, and assignments is given. The session includes different opportunities for the students to get to know each other, to understand their interests in attending the course, and to get to know the lecturers and their work at the university.



First session: Get to know each other and introduction to the course		
Duration	Activity	to-do's
10 min	Introduction Short overview of the course and the Moodle learning-platform	Design a welcoming Moodle course with exercises, inputs, and work packages.
10 min	Icebreaking game Turn your camera on, if' (...you have a pet, ...life on campus, ...like learning online...); see also other ideas: https://hookedoninnovation.com/2020/05/13/25-strategies-to-engage-zoom/)	Find the right icebreaking game for your course and prepare a task sheet.
30 min	Breakout sessions Students get to know each other better within randomly created groups. They have to answer the question: „Which are the three most important things one needs to know about the university of Duisburg-Essen?“ (Use https://www.mentimeter.com)	Prepare the Mentimeter question.
10 min	“Well-being“-break with finger yoga exercises (e.g. https://youtu.be/LehkTdGXjc)	Do the exercise together with the students.
20 min	Discussion Talking about the breakout session results	Share the Mentimeter result on your screen.
30 min	Input and Q&A Describe your work at the university.	Prepare a presentation about your faculty/institute and your job there.
10 min	Assignment Explain the strengths finder and talk about the assignment for the next session: Discover what you are great at. Think about what is unique about you to be successful in your study and personal life.	Decide what strengths finder works for you. We used the Gallup strengths-finder and designed an interactive h5p-element for the Moodle course. (https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/de/254030/strengthsfinder.aspx).

Table 1: Description of the first session

Talentcheck



Menschen mit einem stark ausgeprägten Fokus setzen sich Ziele und verfolgen diese, während sie eventuell erforderliche Korrekturen vornehmen. Sie legen zunächst Prioritäten fest und handeln dann in Übereinstimmung mit diesen.

<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/de/253064/Thema-Fokus.aspx>

[Verantwortungsgefühl.aspx](https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/de/253064/Thema-Fokus.aspx)

People exceptionally talented in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, then act. ership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.

<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252239/focus-theme.aspx>

<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252320/responsibility-theme.aspx>

Wiederverwenden Einbetten

Strategie - Dank Ihrer strategischen Begabung sind Sie in der Lage, sich durch jedes erdenkliche Dickicht durchzuschlagen und spontan den direkten Weg zum Ziel zu finden. Diese Fähigkeit ist nicht erlernbar, es ist vielmehr eine bestimmte Art, zu denken und die Welt zu betrachten. Sie können aus Ihrem Blickwinkel dort Muster erkennen, wo für andere nur ein unübersichtliches Durcheinander herrscht.
(aus: <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/de/253178/Thema-Strategie.aspx>)

Fokus - Wohin gehe ich? Diese Frage stellen Sie sich täglich. Als zielorientierter Mensch brauchen Sie klar umrissene Ziele, ohne die Sie sich schnell frustrieren lassen. Und so verbringen Sie jedes Jahr, jeden Monat und jede Woche mit Ihrer Lieblingsbeschäftigung - Sie legen Ihre Ziele fest. Unabhängig davon, ob Ihre Ziele kurzfristig oder langfristig sind - die wesentlichen Charakteristika sind immer dieselben: Ihre Ziele sind eindeutig definiert, sie sind messbar und in einen Zeitplan eingebunden.
(aus: <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/de/253064/Thema-Fokus.aspx>)

Autorität - Aufgrund Ihrer natürlichen Autorität übernehmen Sie gerne Verantwortung. Sie haben auch keine Probleme damit, andere mit Ihren Ansichten zu konfrontieren, ganz im Gegenteil. Sobald Sie sich eine Meinung gebildet haben, müssen Sie diese unbedingt anderen mitteilen. Und wenn Sie ein Ziel ins Auge gefasst haben, lassen Sie nicht locker, bis Sie Ihre gesamte Umgebung darauf eingeschworen haben.
(aus: <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/de/252788/Thema-Autorität.aspx>)

Zukunftsorientierung - Fasziniert von der Zukunft lassen Sie Ihren Blick gerne über den Horizont hinausschweifen. Sie malen sich bis ins Detail aus, welche aufregenden Möglichkeiten die Zukunft für Sie bereithält. Es kann sich hier, in Abhängigkeit von Ihren Stärken und Interessen, um die verschiedensten Dinge handeln - um ein optimiertes Produkt, ein reibungslos funktionierendes Arbeitsteam, ein besseres Leben oder eine bessere Welt - allein die Vorstellung wirkt in hohem Maße inspirierend auf Sie und lässt Sie Ihrem Ideal entgegensteilen.
(aus: <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/de/253067/Thema-Zukunftsorientierung.aspx>)

Verbundtheit - Sie sind davon überzeugt, dass es für alles, was geschieht, einen Grund gibt. Sie glauben daran, dass alle Menschen miteinander verbunden sind. Einerseits besteht die Menschheit zwar aus einzelnen Individuen, die über einen freien Willen verfügen und für ihre Entscheidungen die Verantwortung tragen. Darüber hinaus sind jedoch alle Menschen ein Teil von etwas Größerem, für das die verschiedensten Bezeichnungen existieren.
(aus: <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/de/253068/Thema-Verbundtheit.aspx>)

Figure 2: Screenshot of the strength-check, Moodle course

Second session: Explore strengths and learn about the concept of "Forschendes Lernen (Inquiry-based learning)"

The second session is about reflecting on one's own talents and preparing their own self-enquiry projects at University of Duisburg-Essen. After focusing on their strengths, students learn about the concept of "Forschendes Lernen (Inquiry-based learning)" (by Ludwig Huber) and how to arrive at a good research question.

Second session: Explore strengths and learn about the concept of "Forschendes Lernen (Inquiry-based learning)"		
Dura- tion	Activity	to-do's Tasks/questions for the students
5 min	Short introduction Overview of the session	
15 min	Check-in: „What are your TOP5-strengths? "Course evaluation with Moodle (Q&A-function) and discussion of the results	Prepare a short questionnaire with Moodle about the strengths included in the assignment.
30 min	Breakout sessions Strength-Talk with another student (tandems) about the strength-feedback from family members and friends	Prepare the groups for the breakout sessions. Did they get surprising feedback concerning their strength from their family and friends? What did they learn about themselves?
10 min	Discussion Talking about the breakout session results	Facilitate the discussion. Ask the students whether it has been easy to find and talk about their strengths. Have they any ideas, to use their strengths during this course and in their small research endeavours?
10 min	"Well-being"-break 50 ways to take a break (https://www.brainenergysupportteam.org/archives/16107)	Talk about favorite breaks with your students. Do they have other ways to relax? What helps them to remember making breaks?
30 min	Input and Q&A: What is "Forschendes Lernen (Inquiry-based learning)"? How do I find my research question?	Prepare a presentation about "Forschendes Lernen (Inquiry-based learning)" and about finding research questions. Literature for " Forschendes Lernen (Inquiry-based learning) " and for developing a research question .
15 min	Breakout session Brainstorming in small groups about their first ideas for their research questions and writing them down on a whiteboard	Prepare a digital whiteboard, explain how to use it and provide the link. We recommend working with: https://r7.whiteboardfox.com
10 min	Question-Cluster: Cluster the questions and develop them further.	Share the digital whiteboard and sort the questions together with your students.

5 min	Assignment Develop the question further in preparation for the upcoming session	Explain how to narrow and specify the questions so that they can work with them. Explain the assignment and ask the students to send you their more specified question prior to the next session. You will check them and give them detailed feedback during the next session.
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Table 2: Description of the second session

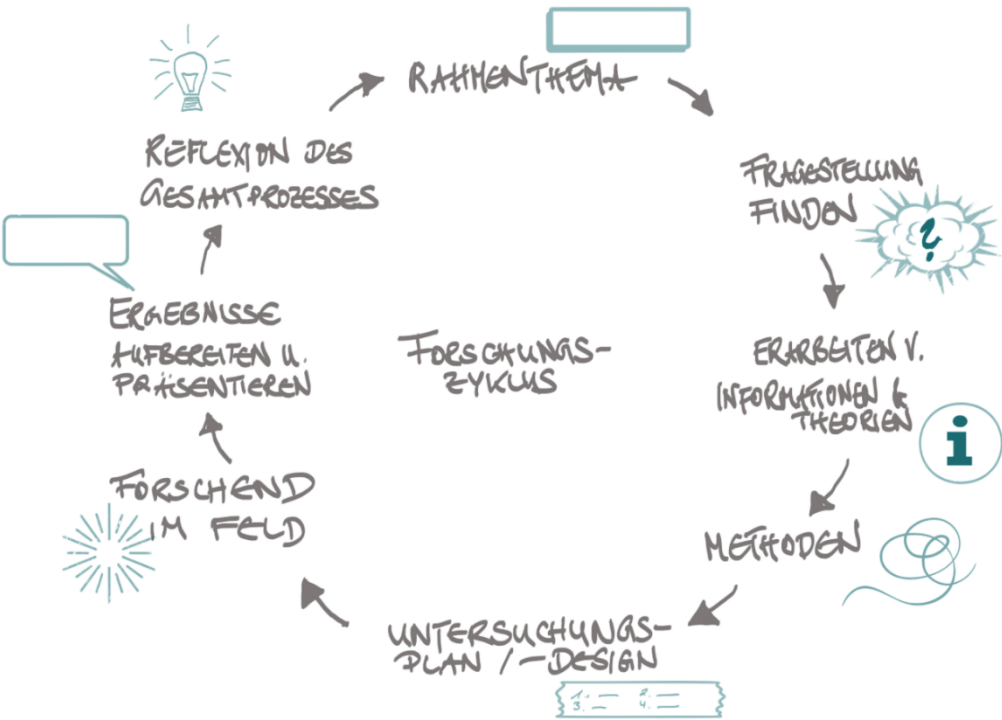
Moodle UDE Deutsch (de) ▾

Was ist forschendes Lernen?

„Forschendes Lernen zeichnet sich vor anderen Lernformen dadurch aus, dass die Lernenden den Prozess eines Forschungsvorhabens, das auf die Gewinnung von auch für Dritte interessanten Erkenntnissen gerichtet ist, in seinen wesentlichen Phasen

- von der Entwicklung der Fragen und Hypothesen über die Wahl und Ausführung der Methoden bis zur Prüfung und Darstellung der Ergebnisse
- in selbstständiger Arbeit oder in aktiver Mitarbeit in einem übergreifenden Projekt – (mit) gestalten, erfahren und reflektieren.“

In Anlehnung an Huber, Ludwig (2009, S.11): Warum Forschendes Lernen nötig und möglich ist. In L. Huber, J. Hellmer, F. Schneider (Hrsg.), Forschendes Lernen im Studium. Aktuelle Konzepte und Erfahrungen (S. 9–35). Bielefeld: Universitäts-Verlag Weblar.



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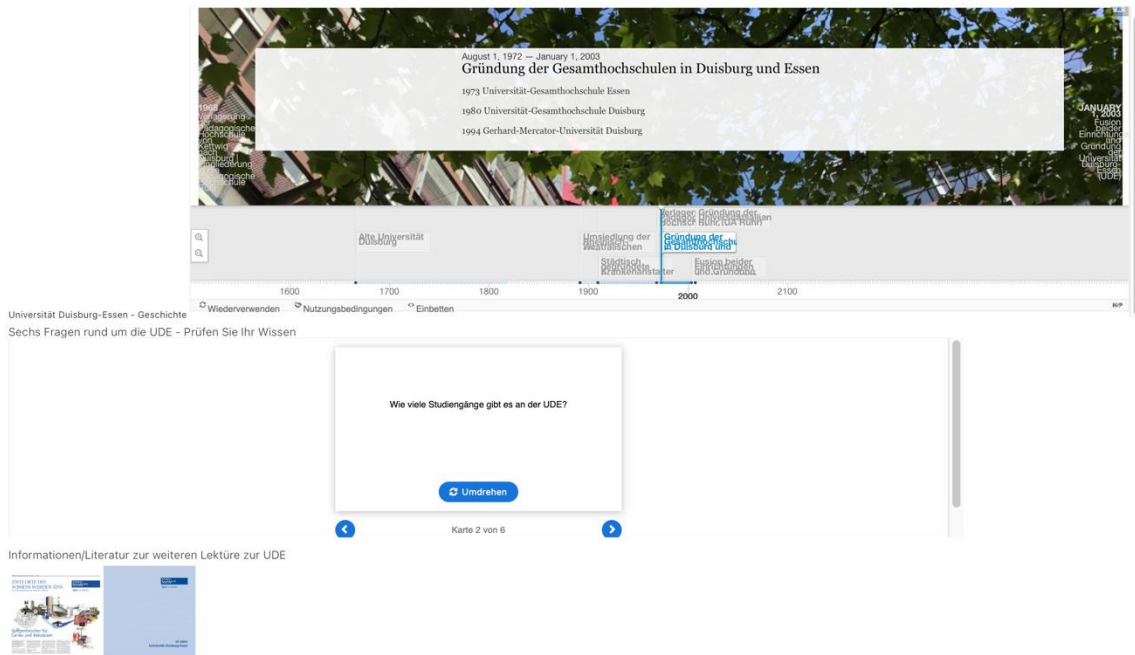
Figure 3: Screenshot of the introduction to the “Forschendes Lernen (Inquiry-based learning)” session

Third session: University - an organization like any other?

This session deals with the students' own self-enquiry projects. In addition, the history of universities in Europe and the history of the UDE are the topics of this session.

Third session: University an organization like any other?		
Duration	Activity	to-do's Tasks/questions for the students
5 min	Short introduction Overview of the third session	
15 min	Specifying questions: Feedback on the assignment and provide examples how to narrow down the research question.	Explain the feedback and answer questions.
30 min	Breakout sessions Students are working on their questions with „critical friends“	Prepare the breakout sessions with groups of four students. Explain them how feedback with critical friends works. For example use this explanation .
10 min	“Well-being“-break: what are my energy boosters? (e.g., https://www.mciinstitute.edu.au/mci-live/how-to-boost-mental-energy-levels-before-your-exam)	Talk about good energy boosters that could be used before exams. How do they boost their energy level?
25 min	Discussion Talk about the breakout session results	Facilitate the discussion. Ask the students whether they have questions? Do they like to share AHA! -moments – These are moments when they realize how to specify their questions?
30 min	Input and Q&A: History of universities in Europe and history of the University of Duisburg-Essen	Prepare a presentation about the history of universities in Europe and the history of your own university or show a video (German/English)
5 min	Assignment Start researching your research questions and gather data, information, pictures for the posters.	Explain the assignment.

Table 3: Description of the third session



August 1, 1972 – January 1, 2003
Gründung der Gesamthochschulen in Duisburg und Essen

- 1973 Universität-Gesamthochschule Essen
- 1980 Universität-Gesamthochschule Duisburg
- 1994 Gerhard-Mercator-Universität Duisburg

Universität Duisburg-Essen - Geschichte
Sechs Fragen rund um die UDE - Prüfen Sie Ihr Wissen

Wie viele Studiengänge gibt es an der UDE?

Umdrehen

Informationen/Literatur zur weiteren Lektüre zur UDE

Karte 2 von 6

Figure 4: Screenshot about the introduction to the history of the University of Duisburg-Essen

Fourth session: Sense of belonging, university structure and contact persons

In the first part of the fourth session students reflect on their sense of belonging to their university. In the second part, they get to know contact persons, they did not know yet.

Fourth session: Sense of belonging, university structure and contact persons		
Dura- tion	Activity	to-do's Tasks/questions for the students
5 min	Short introduction Overview of the fourth session	
30 min	Sense of belonging: Watch and discuss the TV2-Denmark-Video https://youtu.be/jD8tjhVO1Tc	How are you connected? Talk about what we all have in common with each other.
15 min	Breakout sessions What can you do strengthen your sense of belonging to the UDE? What can the UDE do that you feel welcome here?	Prepare the breakout sessions with groups of four students. Prepare a digital whiteboard, explain how to use it and provide the link. We recommend working with https://r7.whiteboardfox.com
10 min	Discussion Talk about the breakout session results.	Facilitate the discussion and summarize the ideas.
20 min	"Well-being"-break Personal value assessment (e.g. https://einguterplan.de/werte-test/ or https://personalvalu.es)	Explain the self-test and discuss some of the result.
30 min	Input and Q&A: Insights in the structure of the university and a short presentation of contact persons, they might not know yet	Prepare a presentation about the structure of your university and about contact persons.
10 min	Assignment Finalising research and poster.	Answer final questions and show them good practice about scientific poster on your learning platform (examples, videos, ...). Clarify assignment criteria (poster and poster presentation).

Table 4: Description of the fourth session

Universitätskommissionen			Vertretungen		
Kommission für Forschung, wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs und Wissenstransfer	Kommission für Lehre, Studium und Weiterbildung	Kommission für Entwicklungsplanung und Finanzen	Personalrat der Mitarbeiter*innen in Technik und Verwaltung	Personalrat der wissenschaftlich und künstlerisch Beschäftigten	Gleichstellungsbeauftragte
Kommission für Diversity Management	Gleichstellungskommission	Qualitätsverbesserungskommission	Schwerbehindertenvertretung	Vertretung der Belange studentischer Hilfskräfte	Vertretung der Belange von Studierenden mit Behinderung oder chronischer Erkrankung
	Kommission für Informations-, Kommunikations- und Medientechnik				

Stand: 07.06.2021
 Bearbeiter: Personal und Organisation
 Technische Umsetzung: cornelia.horn@uni-due.de

Who is who? - Mitarbeiter:innen an der Universität Duisburg-Essen



Wiederverwenden Nutzungsbedingungen Einbetten

Figure 5: Screenshot of the who is who part of the fourth session

Fifth session: Poster presentation and feedback

In the fifth session, students present their posters about the research project they did at the UDE.

Each student/each tandem has 3 minutes time to talk about their research projects. After their presentation, they can come up with a short evaluation of their own work. They can use the following review criteria (poster concept, format, style, combination of text and pictures, overview of the result and further steps, and so on). After the student's self-evaluation the lecturer(s) provide(s) feedback and discuss(es) ideas how to improve the poster.

After the fifth session, students have time to revise their posters. The final deadline of submission could be - as in our case - a month later.

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3. Literature

Brown, Brené (2015): Daring Greatly. How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead. London

Goodenow, Carol (1993). Classroom belonging among early adolescent students: Relationships to motivation and achievement. The Journal of Early Adolescence, 13(1), 21-43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431693013001002>

Western University Canada/Teaching and learning center (2023): Community building. <https://teaching.uwo.ca/teaching/engaging/building-community.html>, 26.07.2023



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