

«Entwicklung, Produktion, Inhalt, Distribution und Rezeption von fiktionalen Fernsehserien». A research-based learning project in a communication science BA seminar

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1. Key facts

- Research-based learning deployed in one-semester BA seminar (see fig. 1 and 2 for time schedules, fig. 3 for additional info)
- Seminar is part of focal point of study of IKMZ investigating media processes, communicators and contents.
- Seminar focuses on development, production and distribution of TV series. Variety of sub-topics are discussed and open to investigation in research-based learning projects by students:
 - business models and media landscape developments;
 - influences on content;
 - processes and decision making;
 - content and messages;
 - success factors;
 - societal relevance; mediation of messages and audience effects.
- Seminar with 25 participants (= max. capacity)
- Performance assessment: seminar paper (50% of final mark), two presentations (25%), bullet points on mandatory literature (20%), active participation (5%), exposé on research idea (appr.)

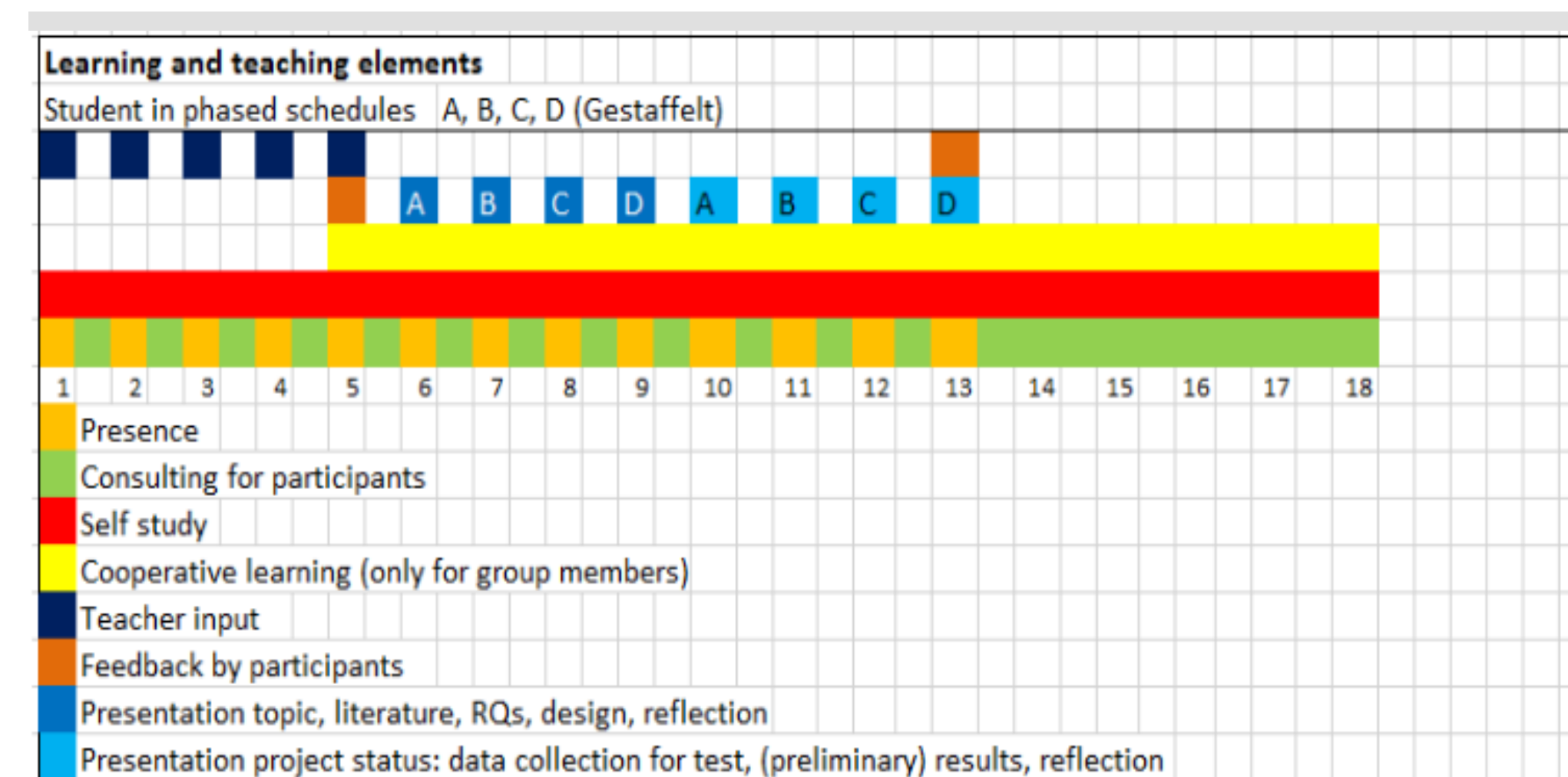


Fig.1: Time Schedule Learning and Teaching Elements

The seminar is divided up in five phases that the students go through: 1) Introduction (one session), 2) Teacher input on theories, models, and topics for research projects (four sessions). 3) Student presentations on their topic, RQs, literature, method, type of data, research design and first-phase reflection (four sessions – science slam possible). 4) Student presentations on the status of their research project: deployed method, data, data collection, first findings, and reflection. 5) Production of seminar paper.

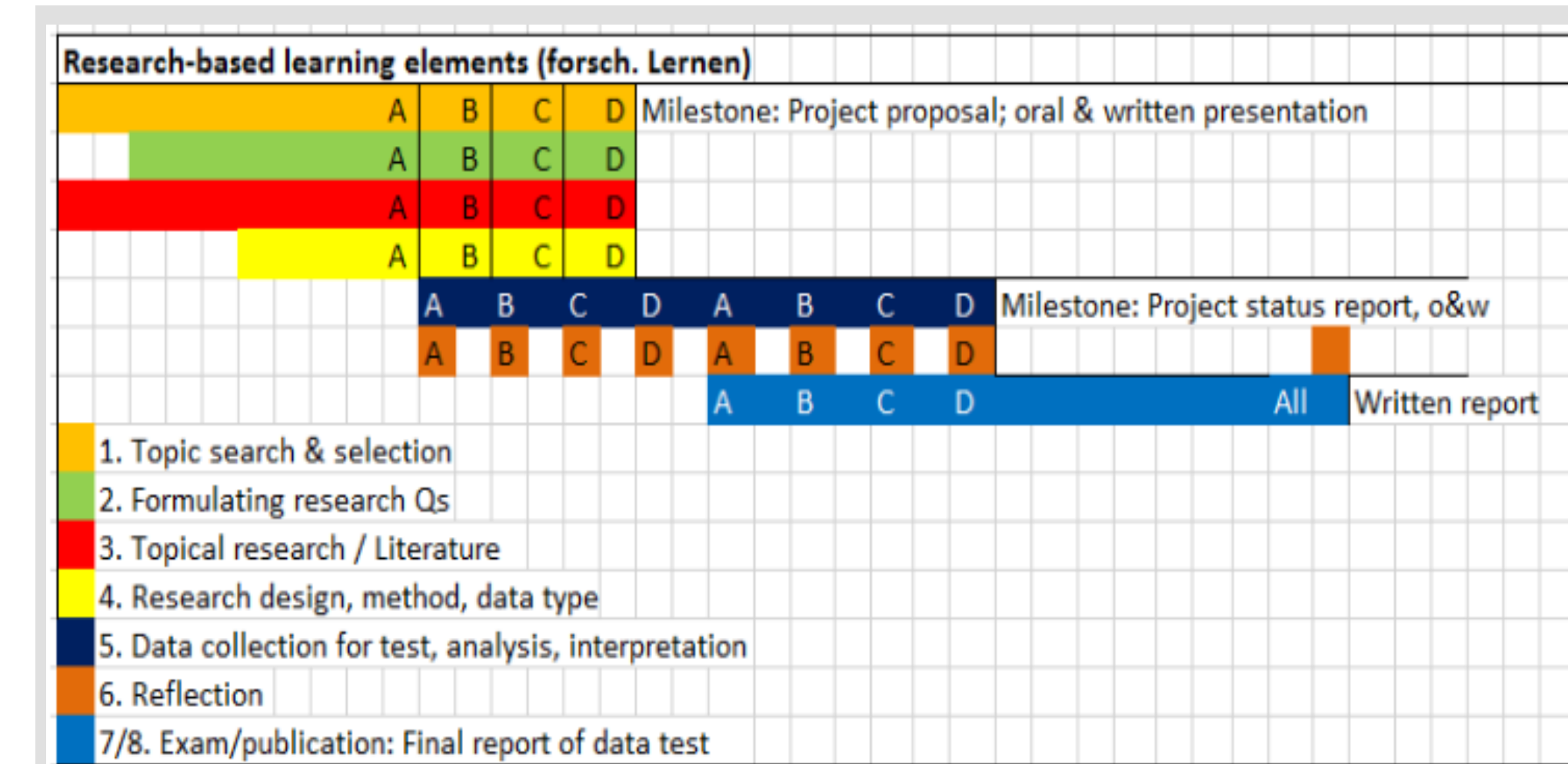


Fig.2: Time Schedule Research-Based Learning

Research-based learning consists of 1) topic determination, 2) formulating RQ, 3) topical research, 4) research design, 5) data collection, analysis, interpretation, 6) reflection, 7) exam/assessment, 8) publication of results. The students work according to phased schedules along milestones. Phases 1-4: The first five weeks the focus goes out to possible research ideas that are condensed in a research project proposal (incl. reflection) and a presentation. Phase 5 is condensed in the next four sessions consisting of students presenting their current state of the project. Phase 6, reflection, is part of two milestones (project proposal, project status report) and of the final report. Phases 7 and 8: the final report has to be handed in three weeks after the last session.

2. Intended learnings

The intended learnings belong predominantly to cognitive research-based learnings.

1. Attainment of constructive topical knowledge on current theoretical approaches and selected empirical studies in research field, theories, models and studies pertaining to the student's topic.
2. Perspective-based introduction of students' selected topical field, overarching research questions and goals: relevance, research gap, ideas about research design, method, data, reflection on positive and negative experiences in this phase
3. Processing of current state of research on topic.
4. Formulation of RQs on TV series.
5. Development of appropriate research design.
6. Deployment of data collection tool.
7. Analysis of collected data.
8. Oral and written reporting on results and process.
9. Oral and written reflection on learnings 2 to 8, as part of presentation as well as in template-based pages of final report.



Teacher in action

4. Teacher Reflection

Workload for teaching (incl. preparation) increases. Level of motivation and cooperation (add. Int. learnings) is higher. Attendance is high. Level of presentations is comparable to previous seminars, but the awareness about research problems seems higher. Students' reflections are useful for future reference and didactics program improvements (method skills).

Nr.	Type	Session Topic	Assessment
1	Input	1. Intro Topic. 2. Seminar Information. 3. Research-based	
2	Input	1. 'Gatekeeping' in media, conceptual models. 2. Influences on content of TV series.	
3	Input	1. Media/TV landscape/market. 2. Production of TV series.	
4	Input	1. Success factors media. 2. Success factors TV Series (reception).	
5	Input	1. Societal relevance as success factor. 2. Take-home messages quiz.	
	Milestone	written project proposal, incl. reflection on previous phases (accepted/not)	Reviewed
6	Stud. Pres.	Student presentation: 'pitch' of project (sales talk / Science Slam). Students of phase A.	Marked (1-6)
7	Stud. Pres.	Student presentation: 'pitch' of project (sales talk / Science Slam). Students of phase B.	
8	Stud. Pres.	Student presentation: 'pitch' of project (sales talk / Science Slam). Students of phase C.	
9	Stud. Pres.	Student presentation: 'pitch' of project (sales talk / Science Slam). Students of phase D.	
	Milestone	Student presentation, project pitch	
10	Stud. Pres.	Student presentation project status: data collection for pre-test, (preliminary) results, reflection. Students of phase A	
11	Stud. Pres.	Student presentation project status: data collection for pre-test, (preliminary) results, reflection. Students of phase B	
12	Stud. Pres.	Student presentation project status: data collection for pre-test, (preliminary) results, reflection. Students of phase C	
13	Stud. Pres.	Student presentation project status: data collection for pre-test, (preliminary) results, reflection. Students of phase D	
	Milestone	Student presentation, project status report	
		Final report. Deadline + 4/5 weeks	

Fig.3: Sessions, lecture type, topics, milestones, assessments



5. Student Reflection

Seminar is evaluated well. Freedom of choice of topic and RQs is highly appreciated. Biggest hindrances are thus far deciding on a realizable research topic, limiting the research field, formulating RQs and sub-questions. The inexperience with content analysis (instead of SPSS survey analysis under close teacher supervision) comes as a bit of a shock to many participants. The dedication, motivation and ambitions are high. Reflection is viewed as useful after initial doubt.

3. Additional RBL intended learnings

Social and individual-affective learnings are part of the research-based learning goals

1. Group work is rare, but cooperation also occurs in feedback sessions, in informal settings and seems valued
2. Motivation is high, but was in previous seminars high as well.
3. Deployment of organisational competence is instigated by negative initial experiences with task, size and content of research project.

Contact

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