

WHEN STUDENTS GET INVOLVED WITH EACH OTHER: THE SPECIAL MENTORING CONCEPT AT THM

Introduction

Mentoring in the introductory phase is nothing unknown anymore, but how to launch such a program when the driving force are students? And why do students come up with the idea of introducing mentoring in order to make the subject of student representatives' work known to freshmen?

Gaps have arisen not only in the lecture hall but also in university policy and student commitment, which need to be closed. The special mentoring concept aims to improve student engagement as well as starting at university. This is made possible because the students are very closely involved in the planning, implementation and adaptation of the concept or are responsible for it.

Identified Gaps

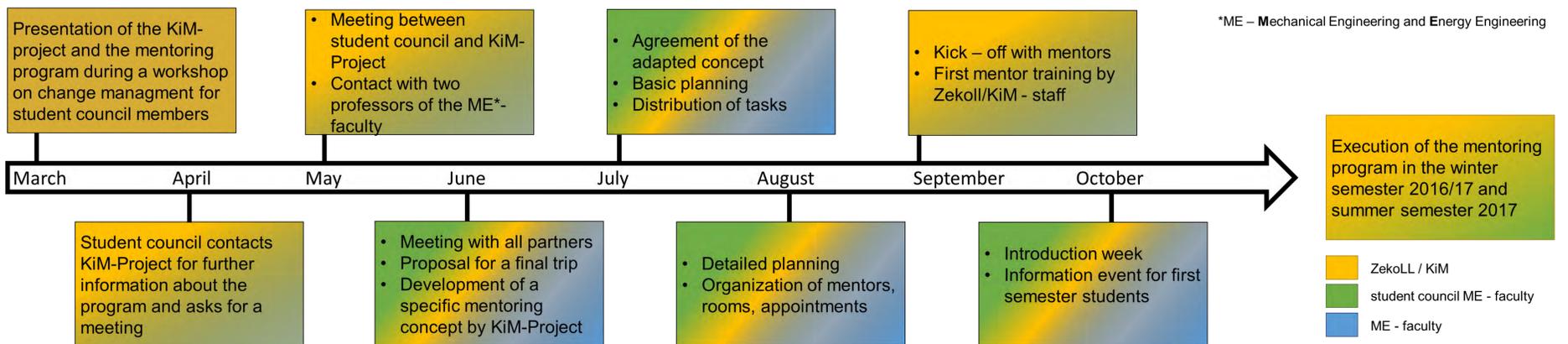
In addition to the social and content-related hurdles at the beginning of a course of study, many students have no idea what student self-administration means. Student council work is regarded as a kind of service of the university and not as an honorary activity of students. This shows that the students have not fully understood the university system and therefore have problems adapting to it.

From the members' own experience, it is particularly important to establish social contacts within one's own semester, but also with students of higher semesters, for a successful study. The student council is the best place to go, as it is an already existing network of students.

Partners



Milestones in the Implementation of the Mentoring Program in 2016



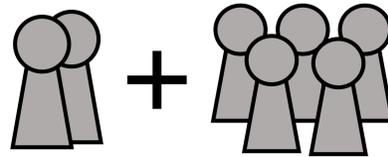
Development of the Concept

Basic Concept at THM: Tandem-Mentoring [1,2]

- during introductory phase
- group mentoring: 10 – 15 mentees per group
- mentors: 2 per group (peer and teacher)
- focus on social, self – and methodological competence
- mentors are randomly assigned to groups
- didactic support and supervision by ZekoLL/ KiM
- adjustment/ development of specific study programs

Specific Boundary Conditions and Ideas

- no teachers as mentors
- student council bears responsibility
- thematic unit on student commitment at the university
- excursion at the end of the program



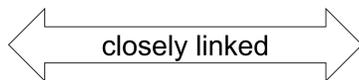
Mentoring procedure

- 1. semester: information event + four content meetings + one leisure activity
 - Start your study!
 - Inform yourself!
 - Organize yourself!
 - Check yourself!
 - Get involved!
- 2. semester: reflection meeting + excursion preparation meeting + excursion

Contribution of Students to the Mentoring Program

Student Council

- coordinating partners
- program advertising
- experience as first-year students
- search and selection of mentors
- ideas for further development



Mentors

- member of the student council or former mentee
- participation in training (ZekoLL/ KiM)
- independent preparation and execution of meetings
 - organize required material
 - securing the results of the meeting

Mentees

- have to co-organize excursion
 - ensure arrival and departure
 - meals: shopping and cooking
 - plan leisure activities
- evaluation of program

Growth & Evaluation of the Mentoring Program and Further Research Question

Table 1: growth of mentoring based on different figures

	WS 16/17	WS 17/18	WS 18/19
study programs	1	2	3
mentors	4	4	12
freshmen	~ 40	~ 90	~ 260
mentees	~ 25	~ 30	~ 45

As shown in Table 1, the mentoring program has grown steadily over the past three years. While the mentoring program was initially only accessible to students of one study program, the program was extended to the entire department in the past winter semester.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the program takes place at different levels and is conducted by ZekoLL members of the KiM-Project. There is also an evaluation within the student council. At the end of the excursion, the mentees are guides to reflect on their first semester and evaluate the mentoring program. The mentors evaluate the mentoring program separately. The concept is jointly developed further on the basis of these outcomes. First results are that mentees report on the great benefit of the program. Still, awareness, attractiveness and the additional benefit for the students are topics for further improvement.

Further Research Question

The motivation of the mentors and their understanding of their roles are of central importance for a successful program in terms of the number and satisfaction of the mentees. The previous selection procedure for mentors seems unsuitable for this sensitive aspect of mentoring. Within the framework of a master's thesis, the role understanding of the mentors is examined in order to derive aspects of a suitable selection procedure.

References

- [1] Reisinger, S.; Niksch, C. (2017): Mentoring². Anlässe und Effekte. Ein Praxisbeispiel der THM. In: Meissner, B./ Walter, C./ Zinger, B.(Hg.): Tagungsband zum 3. Symposium zur Hochschullehre in den MINT-Fächern. Nürnberg, S. 297-301.
 [2] Bock, S.; Niksch, C. (2016): Tandem-Mentoring in der Studiengangphase. In: Kammasch, G./Klaffke, H./Knutzen, S. (Hrsg.): Technische Bildung im Spannungsfeld zwischen beruflicher und akademischer Bildung. Die Vielfalt der Wege zu technischer Bildung. Universität Siegen-UniPrint, S. 158-163

