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Cascaded blended mentoring system for first-year students

At the Faculty of Psychology, Vienna, a large number of students face little staff, which leads to disorientation in study and lack of meta-skills among students. Starting furthermore from a high level of e-learning-competence and –acceptance among staff and students, a blended learning design is selected for supporting first-year students.

The concept is called cascaded blended mentoring: All students have to attend a blended learning course at the beginning of their study. There they are divided into groups of 12 and supported both virtually and face-to-face. One group is assigned to one student mentor each. Five student mentors are in addition supported by one staff mentor.

Student mentors are advanced students who act as a contact person for a group of first-year students. They impart their knowledge on meta-skills and give study information for orientation. They additionally act as course tutors for their group.

Staff mentors are scientific assistants at the faculty. They are primarily contact persons for student mentors with complex questions, but they also deliver insight into their research topics to the first-year students.

Via cascaded blended mentoring groups of first-year students get to know each other well, they have a direct contact person and they can be informed easily. The aim of the concept is to increase social commitment among all while staff is relieved, students are more oriented, lectures are more efficient and finally the length of study is shortened.