

Proposal

Student assistants for
support in creating
knowledge clips



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FOR THE ACTIVE STUDENT

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With a realistic perspective on the current circumstances of the corona crisis, we would like to emphasize that we do not expect a reaction from the Executive Board on this initiative proposal within the normally applicable 3 months. However, we want to submit the initiative today since we attribute a lot of value to the theme digitalization and therefore want it to be put on the agenda.

Abstract

At the moment, facilities to create knowledge clips are available at Tilburg University, but teachers face several obstacles to use these tools. These obstacles can be due to lack of practical skills, but also a lack of time, motivation and perceived recognition. To use digital facilities optimally and thereby provide more students with useful knowledge clips, Front proposes to employ student assistants to help teachers with creating (the PowerPoints of) knowledge clips and in this way release their workload. In this way, the often already existing technical skills of students are utilized while students profit from more job opportunities at the same time. Moreover, teachers save time by outsourcing tasks to students but both students and teachers can also require new skills. The necessary training for student assistants can be given by AV-support who already indicated to be willing to do this. Eventually, Front hopes that initiatives like these enhance the level of digitalization of education at Tilburg University and in turn the attractiveness for current, but also incoming students.

Obstacles for teachers to create knowledge clips

Knowledge clips are a useful digital tool in education and are often short videos in which basic terms or principles for study disciplines are explained clearly. One of the advantages of the use of knowledge clips is that students can always rewatch this basic knowledge, which creates extra time during lectures for deepening of the study material. At Tilburg University, technical tools are available for the development of knowledge clips, but the support to develop those clips can be improved according to teachers. Working on innovation and thus creating knowledge clips is currently not rewarded in paid working hours. Working hours are only credited for, e.g., sharing information and documents with students and in this way keeping courses up to date. Furthermore, although one would expect that the creation of knowledge clips decreases their workload since less education materials have to be explained during lectures, academic directors currently fill up this released time by assigning tasks, such as extra thesis supervision. As a result, knowledge clips are mostly created by teachers who are passionate about education and therefore make efforts on top of their regular working hours to provide their students with these materials. Since the current workload is high, it is likely to expect that most teachers will be tempted to focus on their core activities instead of trying out innovative techniques.

Fortunately, specific requests for financing digitisation projects can be made within faculties, but the attribution of these budgets seems to be very dependent on the faculty and the faculty budget. Front perceives this situation as undesirable, since all students among all faculties should be able to take advantage of digitized education. Therefore, Front sees chances to deploy student assistants to support and motivate teachers in digitizing their education and in this way support all students. In this way, resources can be used efficiently with resulting advantages for both parties and eventually, the available digital tools at Tilburg University can be used more optimally.

Help by student assistants: advantages for teachers

Workload reliefment

We propose to employ student assistants to support teachers with developing knowledge clips. In a regular knowledge clip, a teacher stands in front of the camera with a PowerPoint presentation in the background to explain a certain topic. The technical crew in the studio room in Goossens building supports the filming and editing, but teachers still has to create the interactive PowerPoint, which is made with different software than the one teachers normally use for lectures. The work flow in the studio is currently designed to record videos quickly, but the guidance and coaching for creating PowerPoints and animations is missing¹. The template for creating this PowerPoint and animations are specific and therefore regularly experienced to be hard to work with and to increase the already high workload. Students can be trained easily by the AV support team to create this powerpoint and thus relief workload. Teachers estimate to spend around 8 hours individually on creating a knowledge clip, while a student - teacher collaboration will cost, subsequently, 3 - 3 hours². This saves time for teachers and is therefore efficient.

Deepening of education

By introducing knowledge clips about 'basic' topics or principles within study disciplines, teachers save time on explaining this in lectures and can fill up this saved time by, for example, doing exercises in which students can apply their knowledge, give more examples, or spending time on topics they find the most difficult. Since a lecture can get more relevant and attractive when it is combined with knowledge clips and since the online clips will be different then the content of the lecture, the risk of a drop-out of students in the lectures is also restricted. The topics students find the most difficult can even be derived from analyses of the knowledge clips, for example the parts students rewatch or pause the most, after which teachers can design their physical lectures effectively.

1 Wim Hamers, Head of Department LIS: AV Support Team

2 Aswin van Oijen, former project lead of EdulLab

Helping teachers as an assistant: advantages for students

More effective and adapted education

When a student experiences difficulties with understanding basic theories or principles, he or she is probably able to look up the theoretical explanation of it in a book or article. However, a knowledge clip has the advantage of visuals which attract a student to watch the video and which can help in understanding. Moreover, a knowledge clip created by one's own teacher enables the teacher to relate certain parts of the theory of the course to each other and highlight the parts which are especially relevant for the course, for a bachelor program or for a specific track.

(International) increased offer of part-time student assistant jobs
Front attaches a lot of value to possibilities for students to become active besides their studies and thus to develop themselves further. By creating student assistant jobs related to education innovation, technical aspects with a low threshold and to course-related content, students can both gain new knowledge on various grounds while at the same time receive extra salary to finance their studies. In addition, and not less important, these student assistant vacancies can also enlarge the job offer for international students.

Training student-assistants

To prepare students for providing support in - probably mainly - the creation of powerpoints and animations for teachers, Front perceives it helpful to provide training in these skills before starting their job together with the audiovisual team at Tilburg University. The AV support team already indicated to have a positive position towards the initiative and is willing to transfer their knowledge about creating successful knowledge clips to students, including the PowerPoint and animations, to starting student assistants³. The division Teacher Development could also play a role in this.

Start of the project

To carry out the initiative, Front would like to start a pilot at one of the faculties, for example TiSEM. This faculty has included attention to realisation of digitization projects in its final Quality Agreements plans: in settlement J, it is written that TiSEM, TLS and TST will provide means to realize, among others, the digitization projects knowledge clips/webinars⁴. Another faculty, TSHD, has also expressed explicitly in the Quality Agreement plans to focus on the deployment of

3 Wim Hamers, Head of Department LIS: AV Support Team

4 Versie 1.3c Herstelplan Kwaliteitsafspraken, blz. 23, Quality Agreement J, 20-03-2020

student assistants and their relationship with digitization projects in the upcoming years. In TSHD's plans for theme 6⁵, it is mentioned that 'the means for professional development of lecturing staff will be used to deploy student assistants in order to facilitate lecturers to focus on professional development.' The current initiative would fit here. In addition, TSHD planned to increase the structural deployment of student-assistants because it 'will also contribute to the enhancement of digitalization and professional development of the scientific staff, because more time and knowledge is available to gain inspiration and get to know each other's needs.'

Depending on the faculty in which the current initiative fits best with the quality agreements plans and other visions and views, the current initiative can be implemented via a pilot in this faculty from the start of the academic year 2020-2021 on. The concrete length of the pilot depends on the insights of the Executive Board. At the end of the pilot, Front would like to see an evaluation.

5 Versie 1.3c Deel II Facultaire plannen, blz. 71, paragraaf 10.3 Context and Choices



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