

Sustainable Learning: Experiences with a “Block Week” Teaching Format

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Webinar: Integrating Sustainability into Economics – Microeconomics (October 2025)



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Initial Situation

Background and Motivation

- **At FHGR, a basic module on sustainable development (NENT1):**
 - **3 ECTS compulsory module in business-oriented degree programs**
- **Previous model:** weekly sessions across the semester

Why change the format?

- Limited coherence and continuity
 - *Weekly sessions often felt fragmented; students struggled to connect topics over time.*
- Sustainability topics need time for reflection and integration

Key Question

How can sustainability be taught so that students not only understand it but also feel personally engaged?

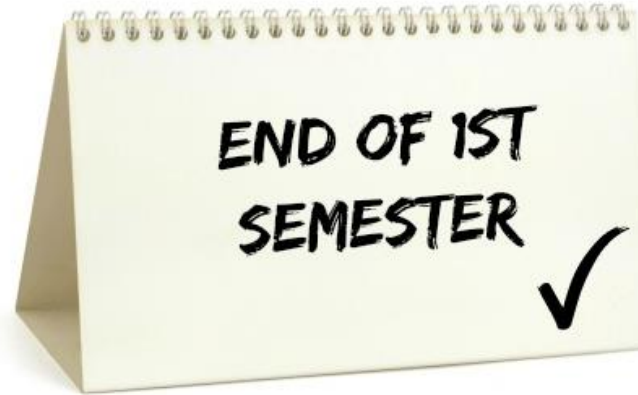
- Moving from theory to experience
- Linking cognitive, emotional, and practical dimensions
- Aim: sustainability as learning for transformation

Idea: compact one-week format after semester end!

Compact one-week format after semester end

Key Features

- 5-day intensive course (theory, reflection, practice)
- Preparation, follow-up via Moodle
- Emphasis on experience-based learning
- Students apply and reflect on sustainability concept
- *Sustainability as something “lived” / “experienced”, not only learned*



Concept for the block week NENT1

Guiding principle

The block week teaches students the basics and most important concepts of sustainable development. The aim is to arouse curiosity and to anchor sustainable development as a central value in professional and personal life.

Learning Objectives / Competencies

After successful participation, students will be able to:

- Understand sustainable development in the context of the environment, society and economy.
- Identify challenges and drivers of sustainable development.
- Explain implementation approaches at the state level and in companies.
- To present the importance of efficient use of resources.
- Analyze sustainability issues based on simple criteria.

Didactic concept

The block week combines input phases, cooperative learning and independent reflection. Interactive methods, local case studies and project work promote the examination of real challenges.

Methods:

- Blended learning (preparation and follow-up)
- Teaching Talks & Discussions
- Group work with presentations
- Reflection exercises
- Case studies with a local connection (e.g. cooperative, local company, sustainable start-up)

ECTS, Time Required and Structure

The module comprises 2 ECTS credits, which corresponds to a workload of approx. 60 hours for the students.

1. Presence in the block week	30h
2. Accompanied work on the video	10h
3. Self-study Moodle (exam preparation)	20h

Concept for the block week NENT1

Proof of performance

Part A: 50% Video and presentation

The students work in groups on a video (**max. 10 minutes**) on a topic of their own choice in the field of sustainability.

The focus should be on topics that are **relevant from the group's point of view** but **have not been dealt with in class**.

The video is intended to:

- include a problem-oriented question,
- make sustainability clear,
- outline approaches to solutions or options for action,
- and stimulate discussion

The videos will be presented at the end of the week (Friday).

Part B: 50% Module examination during the examination week

- MC exam via Moodle on your own notebook
- closed book, one A4 page with handwritten notes is allowed
- 60'

Details and notes on the mock exam will follow in the block week

Dates, deliverables and partial grades

Dates	Deliverables	% Total Score	Comment
6.6.25	Presentation 1st version of the video	20%	<i>Groups present content, structure of the 1st version of the video. Groups receive feedback and, if necessary, do follow-up work based on the feedback.</i>
12.6.25	Final version video	30%	Submission of definitive version
24.6.25	Module Exam	50%	

Concept for the block week NENT1

Weekly planning (overview)

Notes on the implementation of the block week

- Attendance is compulsory for the whole week, and any impediments must be clarified with the study administration
- **Number of students 28 in groups of 3, maximum 10 groups**
- Group work on a self-chosen topic

The block week promotes specialist knowledge as well as personal reflection and teamwork.

The creative form of the performance assessment (video) provides space for personal initiative and in-depth examination of sustainability topics of one's own choosing.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:15 until 11:00	Welcome and introduction to the module	Limits to growth Resources	Biodiversity Ecosystem services	Climate change and impacts	S. Implementation efforts
11:00 to 14:00	Basics of Sustainability	Social dimension of sustainability	Land Use Change	S. Implementation efforts	Q&A session (with MMP)
14:00 to 15:30	Topic Choice & Concept development Hints, tools, and exercises	Presentation of the concepts plus feedback (with MMP)	Training program functions, editing, etc. (with MMP)	Training program functions, editing, etc. (with MMP)	Working on the video and presentation
15:30 to Open End	Develop a video concept on the topic	Corrections to the video concept	Working on the video	Working on the video	Presentations 1. Draft of the video & feedback (with MMP)

Legend

- Blue Input
- Beige Discussion and reflection
- Green Group work
- Bright red Q&A session, meeting with group

Key Observations

Student Engagement and Creativity

- Stronger motivation and ownership than in regular courses
- Creative combination of research and storytelling
- Feedback loops supported iterative learning
- High-quality and reflective final outputs

Teaching Role and Learning Atmosphere

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- Creative combination of research and storytelling
- Feedback loops supported iterative learning
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Conclusion and Outlook

Key success factor

- Collaboration with a Multimedia Production
- Provided technical and creative guidance for video production
- Greatly valued by students
- Enriched course with new perspectives

Main takeaways

- Compact, project-based formats enhance motivation and learning depth
- Promote knowledge, engagement, and self-efficacy
- **Next steps:**
 - Cooperation with external (practice) partners
 - Expanded peer feedback
 - Publication of selected videos

Final thought “Sustainability is best learned by thinking, discussing, and creating together.

Sample Video:



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Thank you for your attention.

Questions?

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