

# Podcast - How to Hochschule



## Show transcript

### How to Spend 24 Hours at HSRW - Part III

00:00:00: Stephan Hanf: Welcome to How to Hochschule, our audio guide about tackling life and work at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, one of the most international universities in Germany. So grab a cup of hot pumpkin spice latte, put on your comfiest headphones and join us as we explore the world of Hochschule Rhein-Waal.

00:00:45: Stephan Hanf: Welcome

00:00:46: Stephan Hanf: back to 24 Hours at Hochschule Rhein-Waal, our four part special where we journey through a day in the life of our university. I'm Stephan Hanf and this is part three, the afternoon. We've explored the night's quiet introspection and the morning's bustling beginnings. Now, as the sun arches higher, we delve into the heart of the day.

00:01:08: Anette Bradley: My

00:01:09: Anette Bradley: name is Annette Bradley, and we're on Kamp-Lintfort campus. We're in building 4, ground floor, which is where the Student Advisory Service is.

00:01:20: Stephan Hanf: That's correct, and we're sitting right now in a, is it a, no, it's a meeting, conference room?

00:01:25: Anette Bradley: It's a consulting room, yeah.

00:01:27: Stephan Hanf: Our afternoon begins in a place that's a beacon for many on their academic journey.

00:01:33: Stephan Hanf: The Student Advisory service here in Kamp-Lintfort, we meet Annette Bradley. Annette isn't just an advisor, she's a bridge builder, helping students navigate not only their interest in finding the right subjects, but also the cultural currents of university life. Do you remember like the first student that came to you here when you started?

00:01:53: Anette Bradley: I can't remember now. I can't remember. But we were just establishing the university here. And everybody in this department and this is, um, this department now is the Student Advisory Service and the Examination Service and the Student Services Department. And that was all one big department at the time.

00:02:17: Anette Bradley: There was no differentiation, everybody had to do everything. The very first study program was E-Government, and yeah, and we had like, like a classroom full of students, and that was it, yeah. So that was the very beginning. So I was basically involved in the second intake. You know, so there were a lot of students who came who wanted to know how to enroll and, and we had to enroll them and stuff like that, you know.

00:02:45: Anette Bradley: So the enrollment at the time was done by us. So the students came and we had to enroll everybody. Nowadays, it's all digitally. They upload their documents via SharePoint. And that, that is the actual enrollment. But there's no personal contact, but at that time, everybody had to come in person and everybody had to enroll in person so that that was basically, that was good, actually, in a way, because everybody who came had a face and if they had any problems, subsequently, they would always come to us automatically.

00:03:24: Anette Bradley: Now it's slightly different because the enrollments are digitally and they have no faces. Um, so they don't know anybody and it's all, I don't know, they have to find their way a bit more. I think it's probably more difficult for them to start, but at the time it was nice. It was very nice. It was nice making the personal contact.

00:03:45: Anette Bradley: It was, it was really nice. I enjoyed it.

00:03:47: Stephan Hanf: But the international factor wasn't so big in the beginning, right?

00:03:50: Anette Bradley: Not in the first year. Um, and the very first international students were Bangladeshi students. And we had a lot to do with them because they had a lot of questions and, um, I remember one girl who came, she thought she was going to starve because, um, she was used to being to open kitchens at every street corner in Dhaka.

00:04:16: Anette Bradley: And there's no kitchens here at any street corners or anything like that. So she didn't know where to get her food from, so yeah, it's quite interesting.

00:04:26: Stephan Hanf: Wow.

00:04:26: Anette Bradley: Yeah, it was very, very interesting. I can remember another guy who came to me at one point and he said he wanted to buy a cow. And I thought, what does he want to buy a cow for?

00:04:38: Anette Bradley: I said, well, why, what do you want a cow for? And he said, I want to slaughter it. In the street, and I said, oh god, I don't know, please don't slaughter any cows in the street. Apparently there was a festival in Bangladesh, and they slaughter cows in the street. But you don't do that in Germany. So, yeah, so there were quite a few very interesting occasions, talking to the international students.

00:05:08: Stephan Hanf: Wow. Does something like this still happen? What is like your daily business here?

00:05:14: Anette Bradley: We advise students who come here, you know, regarding studying courses, what they can study. Um, you know, so there's a distinction between people who already study and people who are interested in studying. So the people who are interested in studying We advise them as to the different options that they have, what might be or might not be suitable for them.

00:05:38: Anette Bradley: Yeah, it's very interesting and very varied job, really. And the students that are already enrolled, we advise them in different situations of their lives. Sort of, they have questions. You know, sometimes it's easy questions. You know, sometimes they're in difficult situations, like health assurance. or visa extensions and stuff like that.

00:05:59: Anette Bradley: So it's quite varied, really.

00:06:02: Stephan Hanf: Is there a difference between the problems German students have and international students have?

00:06:07: Anette Bradley: It's always, it's always difficult to generalize, obviously. But you know, German students, especially if they're very young, they tend to be living at home and they tend to be family assured to their parents and international students aren't.

00:06:23: Anette Bradley: They have to find accommodation, which is. difficult. You know, they're here on a visa, so they have to extend their visa. Usually they tend to have to work because, you know, it's expensive in Germany compared to some countries. There's a lot of burdens, shall we say, on international students. I think. Yeah.

00:06:44: Stephan Hanf: The questions, the students come to you, they change over the year, right? It's something that's constant or something that's connected to a certain period of year?

00:06:54: Anette Bradley: There are things that are, that tend to be constant. Yes. And that's usually the health assurance. I mean, it tends to be the health assurance, and sometimes if you're a bit stuck for money, sometimes people don't pay their health assurance, and if they don't pay their health assurance, then the health

assurance will inform the university, the university has to put a bar into their account so they can't re register.

00:07:22: Anette Bradley: And then when it comes to re registration, they pay and they still can't re register and they will be expelled eventually if they don't attend to the issue of the health insurance. Then periodically is the expelling, and that's something that's happening just now.

00:07:40: Stephan Hanf: Can you explain it a bit more, what exactly it means?

00:07:43: Anette Bradley: Yeah, basically, if you don't re register, i. e. if you don't pay the money, if you don't pay the semester fee, or that, you know, you don't, or you don't pay it in full, or if your health assurance is not up to date. Or if there's no internship, if your internship is missing for the re registration period after the third semester, then you cannot be re registered and, and you will be expelled.

00:08:10: Anette Bradley: If those issues aren't addressed and solved, you will be expelled. It's not the end of the world because basically if you then address the issue, i. e. if you pay the missing amount, or if you then produce your internship certificate or your health insurance is sorted, then you can be re registered, no problem, really.

00:08:33: Stephan Hanf: Yeah, but is there a certain deadline?

00:08:36: Anette Bradley: Yeah, there is a deadline. There's a deadline twice a year and you re register for the summer semester by the 15th of January and you re register for the winter semester by the 15th of June. So if that hasn't taken place, basically. Then you will be reminded and you will have to pay a late payment fee of 15 euros, but then you can re register then.

00:09:01: Stephan Hanf: But after some time, how often does it happen that students actually get expelled?

00:09:07: Anette Bradley: Oh, it's quite often.

00:09:08: Stephan Hanf: Really?

00:09:09: Anette Bradley: Yeah, it is quite often. Yeah, it is regularly actually, yeah.

00:09:14: Stephan Hanf: Yeah. And how many of them try to get back into their studies?

00:09:19: Anette Bradley: Most of them, I think.

00:09:20: Stephan Hanf: Okay. So it's not just people who are done with their studies and just...

00:09:24: Anette Bradley: No, no, no. It's, it's, um, it's, it's people who, who generally, sometimes, sometimes what people do is they realize that they pay too late and they just pay. But they don't inform anybody of their payment. And what happens is after a certain amount of time, nobody actually checks if any money's gone in, you know, because they have other things to do.

00:09:47: Anette Bradley: They have a thousand things to do and they won't automatically check every day if money's gone in. And if they don't know, then the money's landing somewhere, somewhere in space, basically, and, uh, nobody knows about it. And the money is then not automatically connected to their account. And if it's not connected to their account, it's just floating around in space.

00:10:11: Anette Bradley: And then they're automatically registered. And then they're really upset because they have paid, but... Nobody knew about it, unfortunately, so just simply sending an email to the student services department saying, please note that I have paid and here's the payment and the proof of payment, you know, will avoid being accidentally deregistered.

00:10:36: Stephan Hanf: The whole thing about German bureaucracy. You probably really learned what that meant when you started working here, right? Because I think in, I don't know how it works in other countries. But that's, Germany is infamous for that, right?

00:10:49: Anette Bradley: Infamous, yeah, yeah, yeah, it is. It is infamous. But having said that, the other European countries are not that different either, I don't think.

00:10:58: Anette Bradley: We tend to think we're the worst, but I don't think we are actually.

00:11:03: Stephan Hanf: So, so, so it's rather students who are from outside of Europe.

00:11:10: Anette Bradley: Probably they, they get a culture shock. I think, yes.

00:11:13: Stephan Hanf: I grew up in Germany. For me it's sometimes hard to understand why certain things it's so hard for internationals because I mean, you can look it up and just follow the rules in the records, but on the other hand, there are things that I would say completely doesn't make sense for me if I'm from outside the country.

00:11:32: Stephan Hanf: For example, the GEZ I think a very famous, the radio tax..

00:11:36: Anette Bradley: Yes, that's right. That's right. That's something actually, that's something that, that periodically turns up here as well. And that is something that comes all over the year. And what we're talking about is, you know, as soon after you move in, you will get an email and then you will get a letter, which is a GEZ, which is a G E Z.

00:11:59: Anette Bradley: Basically, they're asking for money. And it's not something that you have an option of to pay or not to pay, you have to pay it, whether you want to or not. And regularly, people don't pay thinking, oh, it's an option, but it's not. And if you don't pay, you'll end up in real trouble, because what will happen is They will send you a letter asking you to register, and every household has to pay this tax.

00:12:31: Anette Bradley: It doesn't matter if you have a television, it doesn't matter if you have a radio, it doesn't matter if you speak German or not. It doesn't make any difference. But you have to pay it, and if you don't pay, what will happen is they

remind you, and they will remind you again, and meanwhile, the money will, because you haven't paid, then the money will build up, and then they put an interest on it, and eventually, they will send somebody around, to enforce it.

00:13:01: Anette Bradley: They will try to get in and they will try to take something out of your household, something valuable, so that they can then repossess that. And they can, they can, yeah, it's a very, very unfortunate thing. And it's something that's entirely avoidable. You just need to know that on top of whatever your expenses are, you have to allocate 17 euros a month for radio tax.

00:13:30: Anette Bradley: And that's GEZ.

00:13:31: Stephan Hanf: Yeah. There, there's a very infamous court case about a student, it's a German student who argued that he couldn't pay for the radio tax. And the courts decided he could stop his studies to go working to repay the radio tax and then study again. So they're really serious about that.

00:13:51: Anette Bradley: Yes, they are. Yes. Yeah.

00:13:53: Stephan Hanf: Yeah. It's not everyone in Germany likes, likes that fact. It's really controversial. So what is your main communication with students? Because you just said that it used to be that you meet them face to face, but now it's yeah.

00:14:07: Anette Bradley: It's not different. It's, it's more, there's more ways to meet people.

00:14:13: Anette Bradley: You've got the possibility to phone. So on a Tuesday and a Thursday, we have telephone hours so we can be contacted by phone. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, we offer virtual student service point. People can actually come and join us online. Via Webex, which is a brilliant offer, especially for students who are abroad, because it doesn't matter where you happen to be in the world, whether you're right next door or whether you're in Australia, for instance, you can still participate in that offer.

00:14:48: Anette Bradley: And the other thing is that we're actually open. Our offices are open on a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday morning and on a Tuesday afternoon as well.

00:14:58: Stephan Hanf: Uh, did something change in the way the people or soon to be students approach you, the questions, or did it stay more or less the same?

00:15:07: Anette Bradley: No, not really.

00:15:08: Anette Bradley: Basically, there are always some students who know exactly what to do, what they want to do. And then you have a lot of students who have no idea whatsoever. They have no idea what they want to do. And we offer orientation weeks a study orientation weeks in January, where people can register and then they can take part in workshops and they can find out what they might be interested in.

00:15:34: Anette Bradley: It's, it's not even, it's not even a particular to our programs, to our study programs. Yeah, it's, it's open advice, basically, because we're interested in, in, in helping students Finding out what suits them and not what suits us, you know, to us, it's, there's no point in persuading people to do something that, that doesn't suit them because they would then discontinue at some point, which is not good for us.

00:16:06: Anette Bradley: And the students have lost one entire year because it'll take one year for them to re register for another course. So they've lost all that time in between. So it's not, it wouldn't be a good idea of us to, yeah, to advise them in any particular direction, really.

00:16:23: Stephan Hanf: Um, so, so I guess like the conversations you have with people who are interested in one study field, it's quite easy.

00:16:31: Stephan Hanf: It's just about the, maybe about the structure more or less.

00:16:35: Anette Bradley: Yeah. Yeah.

00:16:35: Stephan Hanf: But. the people who don't know what they want to study. How do you approach that? How do you find out what might fit for that person?

00:16:42: Anette Bradley: It just depends. I mean, today I had somebody and I asked him what he liked at school to get a feel of what he wanted, what he might be interested in.

00:16:51: Anette Bradley: Does he, does he like languages? Is he more mathematically or natural sciences interested? Um, stuff like that. I mean, you know, you go from that, it's, it's very individual, but really, it's very individual.

00:17:05: Stephan Hanf: So in your conversations with would be students, do you mostly find something that might be interesting for them?

00:17:13: Stephan Hanf: Or do you sometimes have cases where it's clear to you it probably won't happen?

00:17:18: Anette Bradley: Yeah, I mean, sometimes, yes, you can find something and you can find that they're interested in something, maybe more interested in something, or you can find an either or option where they might be interested in several subjects that we offer, or they might be interested in other things that we don't offer, um, so that's a possibility.

00:17:43: Anette Bradley: Yeah, it's just very, very wide option, but you know, sometimes, um, like if they're interested in something that we offer, then I tell them, have a look at the module handbook. And that way, if you look at the module handbook, uh, you know, you, you'll know what is being taught in a particular program. And then you can see if it suits you or if it's not, if it doesn't suit you, you can compare because it's

00:18:08: Anette Bradley: transparent, it makes the, the study program transparent to some degree. You can then compare one study program against another, and you

can compare different universities or different programs from different universities. And yeah, it gives you all sorts of. of options. But the idea is definitely think about it early on.

00:18:29: Anette Bradley: Think about what you want to do early on. And not only can you have a look at all the options that we have, you can have a look at the written word, you can have a look at the module handbook, you can have a look at the description online and stuff like that. Um, but the other thing is, if you think about it on time, is what you can actually do is you can actually take part in offers that we have, we have options where you can accompany a student for a day, or we have an offer That's called Get a Taste, whereby in the autumn holidays and the Easter holidays, some of the lectures are open to the public and you can register and you can just go and have a look and join it.

00:19:16: Anette Bradley: And you can see if, if the study program you're interested in, if you're still interested in it, if you're not interested in it. If you thought it was totally different, what it's like to study in English and stuff like that. So there's a lot of things that are good. Are good about it.

00:19:33: Stephan Hanf: I

00:19:33: Stephan Hanf: was just taken back when I started studying 20 years ago.

00:19:37: Stephan Hanf: I didn't study here, but, um, uh, a time before smartphones. I had the feeling that it was a little bit harder to find all the information about my study course. Yeah. what I need, but now all the information is out there, right? But I think it's not so much about information because students still get overwhelmed by what they actually have to do, right?

00:19:57: Anette Bradley: Yes. Yes. I can understand that. There's a lot of stuff to learn, really. I think in one way, it's easier to study at a smaller institution like a university of applied sciences rather than a university, or at least in our case, because we're, we're smaller and basically, What that entails is that, that we work with a timetable and if you follow the timetable, then basically should you pass everything, then you would finish your degree in the standard time to degree.

00:20:29: Anette Bradley: Basically, you know, you'll find, you'll find everything online. Basically everything's, everything's there. You know, people just have to spend some time looking for it.

00:20:38: Stephan Hanf: After all these years working for a student advisory service, what is like the main lesson, main takeaway you have?

00:20:45: Anette Bradley: The main takeaway is I think you've got to love the job.

00:20:51: Anette Bradley: You're going to love the job. Treat everybody the way you want to be treated. I think that's the important thing. And it does help if you genuinely like students and like to help them. That's the thing that's important. And it's what you have to remember, obviously, is a lot of students are away from home.

00:21:13: Anette Bradley: And it's important that they get a bit of warmth and a bit of love, maybe, you know, from from other from other sources.

00:21:22: Stephan Hanf: I know what you mean. Yeah,

00:21:24: Anette Bradley: far from home. You like to be appreciated, I think.

00:21:48: Stephan Hanf: From the quiet console of Annette's office, we move to the vibrant energy of Hochschulsport at the campus in Kamp-Lintfort. This is where Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon, a former Bionics student and now a researcher teaches more than just core training. It's a space where barriers are broken, where each step and each beat in the dance class is a step towards mutual understanding.

00:22:15: Stephan Hanf: His journey from Colombia to Germany is not just a geographical shift, but a narrative of adapting, embracing, and sharing.

00:22:24: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: I grew up in Colombia. I'm originally from Medellin, but we moved quite a lot. So I was in different cities over there. Then I finished my school in Colombia, so what you would call here an Abitur, and I went to Mexico to do my bachelor.

00:22:40: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: So I spent there also four, four and a half, five years of my life, beautiful country, beautiful place as well. When I was finishing, I was like, okay, I want to do a masters. And I started looking for a place. It turned out that I was quite frustrated at the beginning because you start looking for something and it is okay,

00:23:03: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: you need to have experience or you need to have excellent grades and, or you find Course as well, programs where it's just horribly expensive. And I took all that frustration and I tried to analyze it. And then I realized that a lot of it came because I was not looking for the country that I wanted to go to.

00:23:23: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: Then I started focusing on Germany. And then everything was, uh, was pink again, so I could see life, uh, color in life. And yeah, so when I was looking for scholarships, I, one of my main, uh, things was the DAAD portal. And then I was looking for programs and the program that caught my attention the most was Bionics because I wanted to go into that direction.

00:23:50: Stephan Hanf: Why?

00:23:51: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: I wanted to do something related to medicine still, something related to nature and something related to technology. And I saw that bionics was fitting a lot of them. And in Germany at that time, it was, I think, at least from the DAAD, the only university that had the program in English. I applied for scholarship.

00:24:17: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: I got a scholarship for Germany and then I came to Kleve.

00:24:21: Stephan Hanf: What was it like your first impression that lasts for Germany?

00:24:25: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: My first impression. So the first thing, definitely this feeling of accomplishing my dream. I arrived in Berlin and there I did a language course. So the first thing was there's a lot of culture and there's a lot of everything.

00:24:44: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: But for me, I wasn't feeling at home. I, for me at that time, I, it might be because of the language, because all the adaptation process, but, uh, I just felt like another person. I, I, for me, it was impersonal for me. It was like, just another point, a little bit insignificant feeling. And I remember when then I decided to come to Cleve to see the university campus and to actually see where I'm going to just arriving to Kleeve, it was funny because for me, I hear other students, for example, complaining about how small it is or how different it is from big cities.

00:25:30: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: When I arrived to Kleeve, it was so peaceful and it felt like cozy. It felt like home. And I love the university and I love the fact that it has a river passing in between. And yeah, it was like, I was just very excited and very curious about everything.

00:25:47: Stephan Hanf: You didn't have any friends or any, no one here, right?

00:25:50: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: No one.

00:25:51: Stephan Hanf: How did you approach it when you came here?

00:25:54: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: I think for me, the first thing was like, You usually, whenever you go to a new place, even when you go outside, you don't know anyone and you still can communicate, you still can get to know someone. So my approach was just be friendly the whole time. So talk a little bit more.

00:26:14: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: So. Just don't limit yourself to just take the train, say good morning, and then stay there or just take the train and stay quiet and just sit next to the other person and don't say anything. So for me, it was, since I was growing up, whenever we boarded a bus, the first thing that we were saying was good morning.

00:26:35: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: And not only for the person that was driving the bus, but. For everyone. And that way you just come around friendly.

00:26:41: Stephan Hanf: All right.

00:26:42: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: You come across friendly. And I think that was my approach and Apparently it worked pretty good because from what I can remember, I can, I have only good experiences meeting people and maybe there are, yeah, a few things that could happen that maybe someone just was not friendly to you or, but.

00:27:03: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: They're so insignificant if you compare it to all the other things that are very good.

00:27:08: Stephan Hanf: Did you take a German course?

00:27:09: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: Yes, that was a part of the scholarship, like an intensive course. And there were six months, but I really just did four because I wanted to also travel around. So I got the basics from there.

00:27:21: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: But you, from my perspective, you don't get enough for keep conversation, especially in such a short time. So it was still very, very rusty and I couldn't understand a lot of things, or basically I could only say hello. So to say it, but when I came to Kleve, I was first in a room in Kranenburg and I remember I didn't like it that much.

00:27:44: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: It, I was just subletting the room and I started looking for something else. And I ended up in Kleve Oberstadt with, uh. Uh, Simon, which is right now a very, very good friend of mine, and he's a German, uh, guy. And so at the beginning, we're just roommates. It's okay. Then we started talking a little bit more.

00:28:04: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: And maybe two or three months after I moved, he asked me, Hey, you're here. Do you want to learn German? And I was like, yeah, of course that I'm already here. And what best done learning German were people talk German. And he was like, ah, good to know from now on I will only talk in German to you. And it was a challenge.

00:28:26: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: It was a huge challenge. But from that day on, we were just talking in German and I couldn't understand sometimes. Eh, I remember yeah, he did a lot of jokes about the way that I pronounced things or the way that I tried to approach things as well. Of course, sometimes I had to change to English, but just the fact that, for example, when he introduced me to his friends, they were always talking in German or while we were having a party at home, then they were talking in German, um, and maybe not understanding a whole conversation, but grabbing some words here and there, and then you start, yeah, making expressions yours as well.

00:29:08: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: And yeah, at some point you're then just talking

00:29:11: Stephan Hanf: And, but it's always on a social side, right? Because in your studies, yeah, it was all in English, right?

00:29:17: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: Studies only in English. And most of my student life was only in English. Even though, for example, Kimi, the girl that I met at the beginning, we were very close and we were talking a lot and she's German.

00:29:30: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: We only talked in English the whole time and every time that we were in the university and we were doing something with the university, it was still in English. So I actually start practicing my German only with

my roommate. And even though he was also studying in the university, for us, that was not university space anymore.

00:29:53: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: That was more like extracurricular, completely.

00:29:57: Stephan Hanf: Did you really do the sport classes started here or did you start it out in Colombia or back in Mexico already?

00:30:04: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: Yeah. When I was in Colombia, I didn't do A lot of sports. So I like to describe it I was like a grape, just sweet and round. Then I moved to Mexico and in this university, it was a private university and they had a lot of offers, a lot of offers of sports.

00:30:24: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: There, I just started trying things out and I think I started with tennis and swimming and I liked it. So I was relatively active with the sport courses there and they had a course of dancing. But when I took it, I didn't like it. So it was completely opposite to what dancing is for me. So for me, dancing, I was just social.

00:30:48: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: I never learned dancing properly for me. It was just social dancing, going to the disco, having fun. And then we were there and they were explaining to me, you have to count here and you have to do a choreography and you have, I hated it. I hated it. That was for me so limited and so squared. And I remember I stayed just because of the people, because I was meeting new people and because we were doing fun stuff

00:31:16: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: Together, but for me, the course was not important in itself and I don't even remember if I learned something there, but that's how this like culture of extracurricular activities started for me and that's why it was the first thing that I looked for when I came to this university. I remember one of our friends as well from the masters, he was doing hip hop.

00:31:39: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: So he's a very good hip hop dancer and, uh, we were talking and at some point the idea came, Hey, why don't we offer hip hop at the university? Because Kimmy was a dancer and I'm Colombian. I'm not a dancer per se, but I like dancing. And he's a really good hip hop dancer. And we were like, Ooh. And then he presented that to Hochschule sports.

00:32:00: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: I think in that time it was directly with Peter Garzke and they said, okay, if you gather enough people that are interested, why not? And so he posted it in one of social medias and saw how many people were there, made them sign a document. So not a document, just a sheet of paper. And then after they realized that we had some quorum, it was okay, you do it.

00:32:30: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: And that was like the first connection to really doing the sports and to see, okay, we can teach as well, and we can do something we can, um, we can end money as well as a student. Um, which was quite nice. Um, that some point Manthan also asked me, Hey, we're doing really good with the course, but our students need more conditioning.

00:32:54: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: They need to be able to dance a full song of three minutes. So we need to train them a little bit more. Hey, can you do it? You know, like. Dude, I'm not an expert myself. I haven't done it, but sure. Why not? Um, and we started just doing some stuff there. I had been doing, or I've had been training with apps before.

00:33:15: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: So I had some idea of how some techniques could work and yeah. Conditioning myself. But there's something that I trained a lot in the gym, eh, that also my roommate tells me, I have no idea why you train that much, which was core. Uh, so abdominal work and I was like, I could start something like that. So I started having 30 minutes of core workout and people liked it a lot.

00:33:46: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: It was full and, uh, we liked it, but then we realized, poof, maybe 30 minutes. It's not really, or we just focus on the core and it might be boring. And so we changed that to a more functional training and then we extended it to one hour. And yeah, that's pretty much how I basically got involved with the whole Hochschule sports.

00:34:11: Stephan Hanf: Can you explain what is core training in involved?

00:34:14: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: Actually, a core training came with the idea of training your abdominal muscles. We call core basically everything that goes from your hips to your chest. So that's your core. And actually is a set of muscles that we don't train focusedly that much. Now, uh, what happens is that if you train your core, you're able to

00:34:40: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: improve in any kind of sport. That's why the whole idea came. And what we do there is just a lot of training with your own weight. So we do have some exercises, a little bit of cardio, some warmup, and then we just focus on core and we try to involve all their muscle groups as well, not to make it boring, but at the same time to, to not let them rest, so to say, and yeah.

00:35:06: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: That's, that's pretty much what the core workout is about.

00:35:09: Stephan Hanf: And, uh, did it change from the time you started this except like the duration of the training?

00:35:16: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: Yes. Yes. The focus of the exercise has changed a little bit by extending the duration. What, what I wanted to do was actually to include also these other muscles that we were not working.

00:35:27: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: So one of the feedback that I received a lot was like, Really cool. We're training a lot of our core, but can I train my back as well? Do you have an exercise for my arms? Do you have an exercise for my legs? And then I decided to make it more functional. And that's why also we increased that our duration.

00:35:42: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: So it definitely changed. And that was one of the things that I also encouraged the people that came to the courses

was every time that you have feedback, just give it, it doesn't matter if it's good or it's bad. It's just good to, to know what's happening and we can improve from there.

00:35:58: Stephan Hanf: Why do you think so, so many people were interested in the course because they used it for their different sports or you just said you had a lot of feedback.

00:36:07: Stephan Hanf: Did you know what, like the main inspiration, your journey was quite easy to understand, right? It's a progression and course very important. What from the other students who came or come still come to the course?

00:36:19: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: So to be honest, I think. They think it's important, but that's not it. I think that's maybe 30, maximum 50 percent of it.

00:36:30: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: I think they started just because they wanted to try out something and they wanted to see what fits their needs. And they say, because they realize with this group that I'm training, I'm feeling Good. I'm feeling so relaxed. I'm feeling that I can talk a little bit that I can laugh. So it's about the whole experience.

00:36:49: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: It's about the environment, the music that you have there that you drop some jokes that do meet some people that yeah, you, you get to build relations like right now. Usually what, what, what I try to do also, and what I say to the people that come to the courses is don't come here just, or at least don't use this just for a sport in itself, or just to, to train, use it as a social activity, use it to meet someone new, use it to build bonds, because at the end.

00:37:24: Clein Alexander Sarmiento Castrillon: Yeah, so it might be that this course is not there anymore and you have some networking and you can start it yourself and, or you can meet outside of the course and do some stuff together. So I think that's why a lot of people stayed and. Yeah. And so they just have fun. Not because of the course itself, but because what they can do there.

00:38:11: Stephan Hanf: Welcome back to the final chapter of today's journey in 24 hours at Hochschule Rhein-Waal. We are stepping into a world where words create universes. We find ourselves in a special place on campus, the Tropenhaus in Kleve, today a lush backdrop to the Schreibwerkstatt, our university's creative writing workshop.

00:38:29: Joaquin: Banana tree and the banana republic, when will they free you?

00:38:34: Joaquin: Are you tired of being forced to grow or are you so used to it, you just stand tall? Do you want to be taken or do you feel like staying? If you leave, will you keep your home's essence inside of you or if you stay, will you feel at home? If you ever feel like you're not worth a choice, let me remind you of that.

00:38:52: Joaquin: They fought wars because of you, so, you don't feel that bad. Do you ever cry when your leaves fall, or do you know what it really means? It means that time's flowing, and it's brought you to where you've been. Green souls built you up, and they made you who you are. Whether you leave or stay, you're bound to leave a scar.

00:39:11: Joaquin: So I ask again, will you leave or will you stay? Anything that fits will make you brave.

00:39:22: Stephan Hanf: Here in this oasis, students from the Faculty of Society and Economics gather for a reading session to explore the realms of their imagination through the power of words.

00:39:30: Jay Brown: I'm Jay Brown, I'm a third semester student at G&D. I just did a reading for the creative writing workshop where we presented our work from like the garden and like the tropical greenhouse And I joined the beginning of this semester like second semester We got like an email from Renate saying like this exists and it's so fun.

00:39:50: Jay Brown: You should all join So I texted my friend Joaquin I was like you should join because I don't want to do this alone the first meeting He went to a party the night before, so he didn't, he didn't show up the first meeting, so I went there all alone and I was late already. And I was like, yeah, actually like I have a friend, but he's not here today.

00:40:06: Jay Brown: And then next next month he showed up and since then we've been doing this together and we've really grown Everyone's really nice and from now on every semester We will show up once a month for creative writing and write creatively.

00:40:19: Stephan Hanf: So you you're glad that you were forced to come here

00:40:22: Joaquin: Um, yeah, I mean, I feel like I've been very much forced into a lot of situations by Jay in the past

00:40:29: Jay Brown: It is true.

00:40:30: Jay Brown: I'm embarrassed, but I think, yeah.

00:40:34: Joaquin: But I think in general, yeah, I mean, it was really worth it. And it's not like I have had any bad experiences so far, you know, it's just pure enjoyment. I had done some creative writing on myself because I'm sad. And I, I love just writing stuff, which is because it was just a great way to put all stuff out.

00:40:52: Joaquin: Um, so I did that for a very long time, writing, um, poems and other stuff in school. But I had never done anything as a part of a bigger group, like generally.

00:41:02: Stephan Hanf: And you also did parts in German, wasn't it?

00:41:04: Joaquin: Yes. Um, that part in German wasn't mine. I was from other students, like from other students, but, um, I regularly don't write in German.

00:41:12: Joaquin: I mostly write in English and in Spanish, but I think that next semester I might try to write more in German, yeah. So we'll do it again. Yeah, definitely. Do it and, like, all the time that I'll be here, probably.

00:41:22: Stephan Hanf: Yeah. So, so, how do you feel right now? I think it's over. Are you, no, no more stressed? Are you relieved or how do you feel?

00:41:28: Joaquin: Honestly, yeah, because I feel like I really was a little bit nervous at the beginning with like, you know, just talking in front of everyone and sharing what you wrote. But I feel like now I'm very relieved. Um, a lot of the stress just out, especially had support of my friends. That was amazing. So I think that now I feel all right.

00:41:44: Jay Brown: I'm an amazing friend. I make him experience great things. We went to a concert, which I forced him to go to. Big fan of the band now.

00:41:52: Joaquin: We had so much fun in that concert, you know, so, till now, no bad experiences.

00:41:56: Stephan Hanf: The Schreibwerkstatt is a vibrant tapestry of languages. Students write in German, English, or any language of their choice.

00:42:04: Stephan Hanf: It's a dance of words, hopping between languages, celebrating the diversity of our student body.

00:42:09: Fiona Callow: Im Tropenhaus, monkey bread tree, Affenbrotbaum. My life began in the Sudan, warm, dry, dusty, and humid. I am only a young tree of 50 years of age. Us monkey bread trees can reach a ripe old age of hundreds of years, so I have a long way to go still.

00:42:31: Fiona Callow: One day a group of students came. I could not understand them. They seemed to be studying me. They felt my bark, my leaves. They took samples from the earth around my trunk. Time passed as it does in the desert. Next thing I know, a large machine is digging into the earth around my roots, and all of a sudden, I am up in the air.

00:42:53: Fiona Callow: I feel a little dizzy. Then I am placed in a large wooden crate, and it is dark. I feel the crate being lifted onto a vehicle, and then I am moving, rolling along for a very long time. I lose track of time. Is it day? Is it night? And silence. Then loud sounds, and once again the crate is lifted onto another vehicle.

00:43:18: Fiona Callow: But now the movement is different. Up and down, up and down. It allows me to sleep. Time passes. It is dark and silent. Only the rhythm. Up and down, up and down. And I sleep. Noise again, being lifted, then rolling alarm. Darkness and silence. A loud crack and bright light floods into the crate for the last time I am lifted out and taken into a weird construction and planted into soft, sandy earth.

00:43:57: Fiona Callow: It is like I am back in the Sudan, warm, dry, dusty and humid. But when I look around, it does not look like the Sudan. Wild stretches of desert as far as the eye can see. Normal in the Sudan. No, it looks sort of grey and cold. It is like a little of my home within another home. And so my new life starts.

00:44:27: Fiona Callow: My name is Fiona Callow. I originally come from Ireland, but I've lived in Germany for 36 years now, and a few years, I'm 57 now, and four years

ago I decided to study again, and I'm studying early childhood education and care, and I've always loved reading and writing since a child, but lost, um, lost it for a while, and here in the Hochschule I was able to start working with the creative writing again with Renate and it's great fun as a way out of the fast pace of life to come to another sort of area where everything is a little slower.

00:45:07: Stephan Hanf: What's interesting about your, so I witnessed everything, of course. So you switched between German and English. Yeah. You actually did more in German than in English, right?

00:45:15: Fiona Callow: Well, because actually, it's the first time I've done texts in English with the Creative Workshop, because, um, yeah. Um, because it was almost always German speaking people.

00:45:25: Fiona Callow: And this year, there was, uh, Joaquin from Colombia and Jay, who's, uh, American German. Um, and then I decided to write in English. And it's really... It's lovely to swap over because I don't speak so much English here in Germany. Um, yeah, I felt more comfortable. I think, I think I felt more comfortable. I think my personality comes out more when I, when I read in English than I do in German.

00:45:50: Stephan Hanf: Yeah. But what's interesting about this university, so probably when you came here, you already spoke German?

00:45:54: Fiona Callow: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I lived here for a long time. Yeah. Yeah.

00:45:57: Stephan Hanf: It's always like an issue with this university. Yeah. A lot of. A lot of it is in English, so people come here and don't speak German at all.

00:46:06: Stephan Hanf: And we even had the case of someone who, uh, unlearned German while studying. Came from outside of Germany.

00:46:13: Fiona Callow: That sometimes happens to me too because I'm living here so long, 36 years. I can't think of the English words sometimes because I'm working so much. And my studies are, unfortunately, in German. So I thought, I'm going to study at long last.

00:46:26: Fiona Callow: And then I thought here, everything was in English except for my one. So it's Kinderheitspädagogik. But, um, okay, so...

00:46:34: Stephan Hanf: And that's probably, if I understand it correctly, the last time you were part of the writing?

00:46:39: Fiona Callow: No, no, I'm going to be in next semester as well. Someone else. I'm actually almost, I'll be starting to write my bachelor thesis this winter.

00:46:48: Fiona Callow: So I'm going to, one last time. I mean, all your thoughts are gone and you're just with the writing and with your surroundings. And it's just lovely to slow down and enjoy things. Coffee, hot, steamy, coffee to go, white, black or milky, good.

00:47:10: Stephan Hanf: Under the guidance of Renate Schmitz-Gebel, this workshop is more than a class.

00:47:14: Stephan Hanf: It's a melting pot of cultures and a symphony of diverse voices.

00:47:18: Renate Schmitz-Gebel: I'm, uh, Renate Schmitz Gebel. I'm lecturer at Hochschule Rhein-Waal, um, for creative writing.

00:47:26: Stephan Hanf: Okay, how did you came up with the idea to have the... Um, not only writing course, but also they're reading today here at the Greenhouse.

00:47:35: Renate Schmitz-Gebel: And it's wonderful for, for the students that they, uh, have the opportunity to present, uh, their texts.

00:47:43: Renate Schmitz-Gebel: Um, because, uh, sometimes at the beginning when they come to the, uh, workshop, they are very shy. And, uh, have fear to, to read their own texts. And it's wonderful to see that they grow and they, um, become stronger. And today they were great and fantastic.

00:48:09: Stephan Hanf: Yeah, it was a really great turnout. Like almost every seat was full.

00:48:13: Stephan Hanf: Yes, it was really nice. And so also the idea was to go with with outside and inside. Yes, and was amazed how well it was structured. So it was almost like a theater. Was it something you came up with in a group?

00:48:26: Renate Schmitz-Gebel: Yes, yes. We, we thought about this together and, and I collected the stories and the poems and we have a Generalprobe.

00:48:39: Renate Schmitz-Gebel: And I'm so happy that, uh, all works.

00:48:43: Stephan Hanf: It was really great. One last question. So other students who will listen to it right now, who are interested in joining the course, what, how do they find the course? Easiest thing, Moodle probably?

00:48:53: Renate Schmitz-Gebel: Yes, yes. It's Moodle course. Also possible that they send me an email. And, uh, yes.

00:49:02: Stephan Hanf: But it won't, won't be always in the greenhouse?

00:49:04: Renate Schmitz-Gebel: No, no. And, and several interesting places in the shoe museum, in the woods and another park. Um, yes, several interesting places.

00:49:21: Zeynep Akkus: I'm Zeynep Akkus, I'm I'm studying gender diversity on the and I, um. Was here because my friends are in the Schreibwerkstatt.

00:49:48: Stephan Hanf: So how did you know about this event? Just because your friend? Did you know that the Schreibwerkstatt existed before?

00:49:54: Zeynep Akkus: Yeah, but also because of my friends, because they started there. But, um, I didn't know before that.

00:50:00: Stephan Hanf: Okay, what was your expectation today for the Schreibwerkstatt?

00:50:04: Zeynep Akkus: I

00:50:04: Zeynep Akkus: didn't have any. I just knew that they like visited some places and then just wrote texts. But I didn't know like how they work on that.

00:50:11: Stephan Hanf: Yeah. But was it for you the first time to come here to the greenhouse or did you went here before?

00:50:16: Zeynep Akkus: No.

00:50:16: Stephan Hanf: It's not really that far away, but it's a bit far away, so

00:50:19: Zeynep Akkus: yeah Like in the first week when uni starts like in the first semester They have like a freshers week and they like introduced the whole campus and they then we also like walked in there And they showed us and then yeah, that was my first time seeing it.

00:50:34: Zeynep Akkus: That was the second time now

00:50:35: Stephan Hanf: What surprised you the most of it?

00:50:37: Zeynep Akkus: There was a huge papaya in there And that surprised me.

00:50:44: Stephan Hanf: Thank

00:50:57: Stephan Hanf: you for listening to the How to Hochschule podcast. We hope you enjoyed the show and feel free to follow us and recommend us to your friends. We are always looking for ways to improve and we appreciate your feedback. Take courage and do reach out to us at [podcast@hsrw.eu](mailto:podcast@hsrw.eu). Also be sure to check out our show notes and links and more information on today's topics and guests.

00:51:16: Stephan Hanf: Stay tuned for our final installment where we explore the evening, a time of reflection, connection, and looking forward. I'm Stephan Hanf, this is the How to Hochschule podcast. We are looking forward to hear you next time. Tschüss!