



# TAKEAWAY TEACHING

Get inspired to teach study strategies

**THEME: THESIS PREPARATION**

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## THESIS PREPARATION

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### General description:

The overall objective of the five following elements is to prepare and inspire students for thesis writing. It is recommended to run the five elements in the designed order and it is suggested that each element lasts 3 hours – literature reading included. The following structure of each element is recommended:

1. Reading and reflection on selected chapters in the book
2. Individual activities: You will gather selected activities in the working portfolio (WP) to use while working on the thesis.
3. Collaboration / peer feedback: You will also gather selected activities in the working portfolio to use while working on the thesis.
4. Learning Log: In the learning log you will write reflections on your own learning process to use while working on the thesis.

The course is based on:

- Jørgensen, P.S., Rienecker, L. and Forest, S. (2013). *Specielt om specialer – en aktivitetsbog*. Samfundslitteratur, 4th edition, 2nd edition. (in Danish)
- Rienecker, L., Jørgensen, P.S. (2013). *The Good Paper*. Samfundslitteratur.

When (WP) appears next to an activity, it means that the activity must be saved in the working portfolio. The portfolio will include the following elements at the end of this course:

- Curriculum requirements for YOUR thesis
- Check the topic / idea
- Expectations of the first phase of thesis work
- Preliminary research question
- Research description
- Your possible data
- Important key concepts
- Project design draft
- Mindmap with relevant literature
- Thesis outline
- Three-phase thesis plan
- First draft in [Scribo](#)

Content and learning outcome	Literature	Activities	Learning Log
<p>1<sup>ST</sup> ELEMENT:</p> <p><b>THE THESIS FRAMEWORK AND IDEAS</b></p> <p><b>Learning outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To get acquainted with the formal framework for YOUR thesis</li> <li>➤ To initiate an idea-generating phase through reflection on academic relevance</li> </ul>	<p>Chap. 1 in <i>The Good Paper</i></p>	<p><u>Individual activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify requirements and possibilities for the thesis as formulated in YOUR curriculum (WP).</li> <li>• Formulate within the framework of the curriculum three main project ideas and relate them to your course and your core discipline. Describe how the three overarching ideas might relate to one another.</li> <li>• Select one of the three ideas – the one you like best – and do the activity in the handout: <b>Activity 1: Check your topic and your thesis idea</b> (for the WP).</li> </ul> <p>For the activity, you may need to consult the <b>pentagon model</b>.</p> <p><u>Collaboration / peer feedback:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview in pairs: Formulate 5-10 wh-questions to ask a fellow student about his / her project idea and preliminary problem formulation. Then interview each other in turn. Examples of questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How can you develop your idea?</li> <li>○ Why is it relevant?</li> <li>○ Who is it important for? Etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Spend 5-10 minutes each writing down how you imagine the first phase of your thesis work (WP). Draw on good / bad experiences from previous major writing assignments / projects. Present your initial plan for your first phase to each other, justify your choices and compare them. How can you get inspired by each other's ideas for the first phase?</li> </ul>	<p>Think about why you chose your degree programme.</p> <p>Write in your Learning Log:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it that's interesting about the disciplinary field(s) of your studies?</li> <li>• What knowledge, skills and competencies you have acquired through your studies?</li> <li>• How do you think that you can use these in your thesis?</li> <li>• Have you been inspired by your work on generating ideas today? Why / why not?</li> </ul>

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<p>2<sup>ND</sup> ELEMENT:</p> <p><b>THESIS RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p> <p><b>Learning outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ to formulate a discipline-specific problem that is both relevant and realistic</li> <li>➤ to describe how the problem is situated within a discipline and how it contributes to the scholarly field</li> </ul>	<p>Chap. 4 in <i>The Good Paper</i></p>	<p><u>Individual activities:</u></p> <p>Think of your idea(s) from the last time and do the following two activities (both for the WP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write your research question today. Write about what you want to investigate, including which discipline-specific theories, methods, concepts.</li> <li>• Write a description of your research.</li> </ul> <p>Maybe it's easier for you to do the second one first - have a go.</p> <p><u>Collaboration / peer feedback:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a partner. Swap your problem descriptions and read them as a critical friend. Mark your partner's text where the disciplinary area and relevance are described.</li> <li>• Rate on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the most realistic) the extent to which your problems / issues are realistic in relation to writing a thesis in a semester.</li> <li>• Now you should all write your research question / issue on a post-it note and put it face down. Draw a post-it (not your own). Then, in groups of about four, read and discuss the issues that you have drawn. Evaluate their disciplinary strength, their relevance and how realistic they are for a thesis project. Choose an issue that you think is really good and explain to the rest of the team why you chose it.</li> </ul>	<p>Write in your Learning Log what you think about formulating a problem / issue - including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is important to consider when formulating a problem?</li> <li>• What experience do you have from the past?</li> <li>• Who might you be able to productively discuss your problem with?</li> <li>• How would you characterize your research problem (thesis, focus, question, sub-questions)?</li> </ul> <p>In your Learning Log, write how you envision your supervisor helping you formulate a research question and how (using which theories and methods) you respond to this. You can find inspiration in the chapter on supervision in <i>The Good Paper</i>, pp. 349-361.</p>

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<p>3<sup>rd</sup> ELEMENT:</p> <p><b>THESIS DESIGN</b></p> <p><b>Learning objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ to select and justify theory or theories and method(s) relevant to your discipline</li> <li>➤ to understand their interdependence</li> </ul>	<p>Chap. 9 and 10 in <i>The Good Paper</i></p>	<p><u>Individual activities:</u></p> <p>Think of your problem / issue from last time. Today you need to consider and work on how you can handle / solve / deal with your problem.</p> <p>Do the following two activities (both for the WP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a brief overview of possible (or already gathered) kinds of data for your thesis.</li> <li>• Write the main concepts in your thesis: identify and define the concepts you will use in your thesis. In other words, what are the key concepts you will use to analyze, categorize, evaluate...?</li> </ul> <p>The two activities will help you to spot the discipline-specific theories and methods that are relevant to your research question.</p> <p>Make a preliminary draft of a project design based on the Pentagon model used in <i>The Good Paper</i> and Scribo (for the WP).</p> <p><u>Collaboration / peer feedback:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In pairs or small groups, present your preliminary project design to each other.</li> <li>• Highlight similarities and differences in your designs</li> <li>• Highlight strengths and weaknesses in your designs</li> </ul>	<p>In your Learning Log, draw a table with four boxes (a cross):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the upper left-hand box enter the disciplinary theories you feel 'comfortable' using. Ones that you have read and understood well.</li> <li>• In the upper right-hand box enter the theories you do not feel 'comfortable' using. Ones that you may have read but not understood.</li> <li>• In the bottom left-hand box enter the discipline-specific methods you feel 'comfortable' using. Ones that you have read about, maybe also used, and understood well.</li> <li>• In the lower right-hand box enter the methods that you do not feel 'comfortable' using. Ones that you may have read about but never tested, and that you have not understood very well.</li> </ul> <p>Consider whether and how you can make use of theories and methods from the left-hand side of the figure when you have to write your thesis.</p>

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<p>4<sup>TH</sup> ELEMENT:</p> <p><b>THESIS LITERATURE</b></p> <p><b>Learning objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ to identify academic keywords in your own project design</li> <li>➤ to begin literature searches early on and become aware of your own search strategies</li> </ul>	<p>Chap. 5 in <i>The Good Paper</i></p>	<p><u>Individual activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think of your project design from the last time.</li> <li>• Identify 8-10 keywords in your design and categorize them according to whether they present theory, methodology, empirical data - or other areas in your project.</li> <li>• Prioritize 3 keywords that you think are the most important ones and use them as keywords.</li> <li>• As a preliminary search, try to implement the search strategy outlined in the handout: <a href="#">Create a search strategy</a></li> <li>• Make a mind map with the following title in the inner circle: Relevant Literature. It can be helpful to categorize the literature: for example, distinguish between primary / secondary literature, theory / methodology literature, reference books, magazines or the like. (WP)</li> </ul> <p><u>Collaboration / peer feedback:</u></p> <p>Form groups of four.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present your mind map to each other for inspiration.</li> <li>• Get oriented with the blue route on the Study Metro on using academic sources:</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://studiemetro.au.dk/en/sources-in-academic-work/">http://studiemetro.au.dk/en/sources-in-academic-work/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write your first selected keywords / search words into your Learning Log.</li> <li>• List what other possible keywords / search words they resulted in when using the search strategy outlined in the handout.</li> <li>• Write half a page on the search strategies you normally use. Include how you searched for and used literature for your most recent major paper (possibly your bachelor project).</li> </ul>

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<p>5<sup>TH</sup> ELEMENT:</p> <p><b>THESIS PROCESS AND SUPERVISION</b></p> <p><b>Learning objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ to reflect on the process and identify its phases</li> <li>➤ to consider how you as a student can prepare and take responsibility for your supervision, so you make use of your future supervisor in the best way possible.</li> </ul>	<p>Chap. 13 in <i>The Good Paper</i></p>	<p><b>Individual activities:</b></p> <p>An important part of the process is supervision by a supervisor from your area of study. Think of previous supervision situations and do the activity below: <i>How will you make use of your supervisor?</i> (WP). You may want to consider the contents of your work portfolio in connection with this question.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you make use of your supervisor?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a prioritized list with 3-5 points about how you think you will use your supervisor. For example, do you mainly need to consult your supervisor as an expert on the content, for suggestions for literature, theory, method or process, for mini-deadlines, or for dialogue and coaching?</li> <li>• Later, show your supervisor what you have written</li> <li>• Find out how many hours of supervision you can count on receiving with your supervisor. This will provide the basis on which to organize the supervision process according to your needs.</li> <li>• If your supervisor doesn't offer you a supervisory procedure, suggest and agree on a procedure for the supervision.</li> </ul> <p>(From Jorgensen, P.S., Rienecker, L. and Forest, S. (2013). <i>Specielt om specialer – en aktivitetsbog</i>. Samfundslitteratur, 4th edition, 2nd edition, p. 31.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the first meeting, you should be able to present a thesis outline. Do the attached <b>Thesis Outline</b> activity (WP)</li> </ul>	<p>2X2 lists:</p> <p>Write in your Learning Log two lists: One with good experience from previous supervision and a bad experience from previous supervision. Consider how you can stick with the good experiences, and how in the future you can avoid the bad experience. Be as specific as possible</p> <p>Write again two (new) lists: One with what you expect, will be easy (or less difficult) and one with what you expect, will be difficult in the thesis process. Consider and write down who can help you with what you think will be difficult. The supervisor / peers / friend or others?</p>

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make a preliminary thesis plan divided into three phases: start-middle-end (WP). What tasks / milestones / targets do you imagine should be part of the three phases? Give the tasks time limits.</li><li>• Make a preliminary and personal weekly schedule including work on the thesis. Consider the time of day you work best.</li><li>• Start actually writing the thesis early. Write your first draft in Scribo (WP). Log on <a href="https://www.scribo.dk/en">https://www.scribo.dk/en</a></li></ul> |  |
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