

Experts in Teamwork

Spring 2012

Guide

for
students

January 2012

Introduction

This document is a guide to what is expected of a team of students in the course Experts in Teamwork (EiT). The guide's main focus is on the process report concerning cooperative skills within the team. The process report is based on reflection on the student's individual behaviour, as well as their pattern of behaviour in the team. This is something most students have little or no experience with. We hope this guide will be of help in the writing of such a report.

The interdisciplinary team and the project work is the foundation for the experience-based learning in EiT. It is the student's ability to see the interaction within the team that is the focus, and for them to develop personal skills through the teamwork. A cooperative climate in the team is necessary for a successful project result. Therefore EiT has special focus on general competences such as teamwork and social skills.

Good luck!
Bjørn Sortland
Head of EiT

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1. Guidelines

The guidelines for Experts in Teamwork are given by:

- Course description
- Guidelines for the project report and process report
- Assessment criteria for the process report and project report

These documents are presented below, and are also posted on these websites: www.ntnu.no/eit (Norwegian) and www.ntnu.edu/eit (English)

1.1 Course description

Academic responsibility: Bjørn Sortland

The professor (village supervisor) and village theme for each village are presented on the websites: www.ntnu.no/eit (Norwegian) and www.ntnu.edu/eit (English).

Intention

Experts in Teamwork is a course in which students apply their academic competence in interdisciplinary project work to learn teamwork skills to prepare them for working life. Relevant issues from society and working life form the basis for the project work, and the student teams should work together with external partners. The students' combined academic competencies must be appropriate to the project with which the team is to work.

The aim is that, through team-based reflection, the students will gain increased insight into patterns of behaviour and approaches (“ways of being”) that are required to achieve positive results in interdisciplinary project work. An objective of the course is to increase insight into the distinctive characteristics of other academic disciplines and their ways of working. At the same time, the course is intended to strengthen the students' own academic identity, through the interaction in the team and the way in which their academic competence contributes to the project.

Learning method

The learning method in EiT is experience-based. Students develop teamwork skills by learning from specific cooperative situations in their project work. Together, the team members reflect on the effects of their own patterns of behaviour and approaches. This team-based reflection forms the basis for developing cooperation.

Learning outcomes

After completing the Experts in Teamwork course, students will be able to communicate and cooperate in a way that enables them to contribute to integrated, well-rounded solutions in interdisciplinary project work. This means that:

- In interdisciplinary cooperation, students can apply and communicate their own academic competence, and contribute to realizing the benefits of the team's interdisciplinary breadth.
- Students can develop effective team interaction by reflecting on cooperative situations,

and by applying basic concepts and methods from relevant research areas.

Academic content

Teamwork skills imply that students are aware of how they communicate, plan, decide, solve tasks, handle disagreement and relate to professional and personal differences within the team. Teamwork skills also enable students to apply basic concepts and methods from group theory by relating these to specific cooperative situations in the team. Teamwork skills are practised through team-based reflection on the interaction in the team, and through constructive feedback that the team members provide to each other.

The basis for the student team's project work is the village theme and the combined academic competencies of the team members. Through the project work, the students are trained in developing effective group interaction. This means communicating and cooperating through active listening, testing your own assumptions (describing how you interpret what has been said), asking open questions, talking openly about difficult and unpleasant topics, providing constructive feedback on patterns of behaviour and approaches related to the interaction, and working on improving the behavioural patterns in the team to improve the teamwork.

Organizational framework

In EiT, students are divided into groups, called villages, of up to 30 students. Two types of villages are offered: intensive, held for three weeks during January, and semester-based, held every Wednesday throughout the semester. The village language (language spoken in the village) is either Norwegian or English. Each village is headed by a professor, called the village supervisor.

Each village has a broad overall academic theme related to society and working life. This theme forms the basis for the student team's project work. The village may have external partners that represent the theme, and that may be recipients of the students' work. The village themes are presented on the EiT website. The desired combination of academic competencies, village language, and type of village are specified as guidelines for students' choice of village.

The students submit their preferences for five villages in order of priority through StudentWeb by 1 November. Students are allocated to the villages based on their preferences and the village's need for various academic competencies. In each village, the students are divided into interdisciplinary teams, normally with five members each.

Learning activities

At the beginning, activities are arranged for students to get to know each other, chart the combined competencies of the team, and develop proposals for their project. After approval by the village supervisor, the students work with the project throughout the semester or the intensive period. The student team is facilitated as they work. Facilitation involves being observed and receiving feedback on the interaction in the team. In addition, the students write a personal log and a team log.

Compulsory assignments

At the end of the semester / intensive period, each student team must deliver an oral presentation of their project and conduct a dialogue about the cooperation in the team. The oral presentation and dialogue about the cooperation must be approved by the village supervisor before the final reports are submitted for assessment.

Final reports

The final reports consist of a project report and a process report by the students. The project report must describe the team's problem formulation and the result of the project work. The process report considers the cooperation in the team as well as what the individual has experienced and learned through the team-based reflection on relevant situations from the teamwork. The expectations regarding the work by the student team and the criteria for assessment are described in the documents "Retningslinjer for prosjekt- og prosessrapporten" ["Guidelines for the project report and process report"] og "Vurderingskriterier" ["Assessment criteria"].

Form of assessment

The final project report and process report by the student team are assessed in relation to the grading scale A– F. The team receives one common grade.

The project report and the process report both counts for 50 per cent of the final grade.

Attendance

Intensive villages: Daily attendance during the intensive period (08:00-16:00)

Semester-based villages: Attendance every Wednesday (08:00-16:00)

Students who do not attend either the first or the second village day will not be allowed to participate in the course during the semester. In the event of illness or conflict with approved study activities, the student may apply for approved absence and allocation to a village during the third week of the semester (applies only to semester-based villages). Absence from the village for more than four days, regardless of the reason, will result in failure.

Prerequisites:

EiT is normally compulsory in all programmes of study at second-degree level at NTNU. The programme descriptions for the programmes of study provide information about the stage in the programme at which EiT is to be completed, and whether it can be taken as an intensive or semester-based course. Other students may apply for admission to EiT, but must be qualified for admission to a master's programme in order to participate.

Approved by Rector as the EiT board.

1.2 Guidelines for the project report and process report

Final reports

Each team must turn in one project report and one process report. The village supervisor may allow students to hand in parts of these reports before the final due date. The final due date for turning in all reports is one week after the last EiT village day.

The project report

The village theme makes the foundation for the students project work. The project report describes the team's project, and the outcome of their work. Each student should contribute with their academic competence in choosing and carrying out the project.

The common assessment criteria for the project report cover all villages. Each village should in addition have specific guidelines for the project work and writing of the report based on the village theme.

The project report should include a summary of about 200 words. This summary includes the team's evaluation of the social relevance of the project, and proposals as to how the project work could be continued.

The process report

The purpose of the process work is to improve the project cooperation. The process report is based on the team's reflections, and should communicate each students experience and learning from the teamwork. Their thoughts, reflections and behavioural changes should be documented. Writing logs are the starting point for writing a process report. Students should write logs on a daily basis. Both personal log and team log provide an opportunity for reflection, and is therefore a good starting point for the process report.

The process report is based on situational narratives and on reflections about how the cooperation developed within the team. The report should highlight how the behavioural patterns and actions of individuals have affected the project work. It is important that each team member's perception of the situation is highlighted, and it should be written as citations. All team members must contribute in the writing of the process report, to ensure that each team member bring forward thoughts and feelings obtained from the personal log.

The situation narratives should highlight how the students communicate and cooperate, more specifically how they plan, decide, solve tasks, handle disagreement and relate to professional and personal differences within the team.

In the analysis, the students should apply basic group concepts and theories, for example group development theory and characteristics of team processes.

An important goal of interdisciplinary project work is to make students conscious of their own academic competence, and make them able to communicate it to others. The process report therefore contains reflections about how the team worked to ensure the sharing of academic competencies.

The process report should not exceed 25 pages.

1.3 Assessment criteria for the process report

Grade	Prerequisites		Team Process	
	Situations	Theory	Reflections about key team episodes	Actions taken to improve the team work
A Outstanding	Situations and reflections are presented in a way that highlights how individual team members have affected the progress of the project.	Particularly good application of relevant group concepts and theory	Highlights the development of cooperation within the team, and reflects in a considered and insightful way about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way individual team members perceive their own and others' approach and behavioural patterns • The appropriateness of various actions • Improvements in the teamwork Reflections highlight very well: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the team communicate and cooperate • How the disciplinary diversity of the team influence the communication 	The team makes and justifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in behavioural patterns as a result of reflection on a particular situation • Continues and reinforces a measure that works to improve the cooperation
B Very good		Some relevant concepts applied Some group theories integrated		The team mentions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in behavioural patterns as a result of reflection on a particular situation • Continues and reinforces a measure that works to improve the cooperation
C Uniformly Good			Team reflections on the approach and behavioural patterns of individual team members in specific situations, how they provided feedback to each other, and how this influenced the teamwork.	The team describes some actions taken to improve the team work
D Acceptable		Mentions theory without using it	Reflections highlight somewhat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the team communicate and cooperate • How the disciplinary diversity of the team influence the communication 	
E Satisfies minimum requirements		Situations are presented in a general way. Little attention given to specific team members.	The students describe the team's work and recount the team experience in a chronological fashion. Some tools were used and these and some common experiences are presented. Lack of reflection on the appropriateness of their own actions.	
F Fail	Inadequate summary of team episodes.	Inadequate summary of team episodes.	Purely chronological account of team meetings. Absence of reflection and self-awareness. Frequently characterized by such statements as "We had no conflicts and therefore had nothing to write about . . . "	

Teamwork skills: Each team member reflects on increased insight and skills that she or he has acquired and will apply in future teamwork.

Report writing: The structure of the report, language and use of references may also positively or negatively affect the final grade.

1.4 Assessment criteria for the project report

Grade	Interdisciplinary	Written Report
A Outstanding	The team has used its disciplinary diversity well to: 1. To develop an approach to the project in which all team members could participate 2. To work on and complete the project	Project work has been carried out in a very good way: • The project exemplifies the village theme • The approach to the project and the project goals are clearly described in the introduction • The methods used and why they were chosen are clearly described • The outcome of the project is clearly presented and discussed • The social relevance of the outcome is very well discussed and suggestions are made as to how the project can be continued
B Very good		
C Uniformly good	The team has used its disciplinary diversity to some degree	Project work has been carried out in a satisfactory way: • The project is relevant to the village theme • The project approach and goals are described in the introduction • Some relevant methods have been used • The outcome of the project is presented and discussed • The social relevance of the outcome is discussed and suggestions are made as to how the project can be continued
D Acceptable	The team has been unable to find a project to which all team members contributed.	The project is related to the village theme. The report has no clear presentation of the project proposal or goals Choice of method appears random. The results are not presented clearly
E Satisfies minimum requirements	Team members have largely worked separately from their own individual disciplinary perspectives	
F Fail	The team has not cooperated on a common project	The project is not relevant to the village theme The report lacks structure and the project work is poorly described

In addition to the above criteria, each village has specific guidelines for its project work and report.

Summary (200 words): The team's assessment of the social relevance of the project and proposal as to how the project can be continued.

2. Description of the key elements in the process report

Situations, theoretical reflections, and actions are among the elements that must be included in the process report, as specified in the assessment criteria. These elements are described below. The process report should also include a summary in which the team members reflect on the knowledge and skills that they take with them into new teamwork activities.

2.1 Situations

Specific situations or events form the starting point for the process report. The process report does not need to include a chronological description of all the events in the team. Focus on situations that have been significant, that characterize the team, or that triggered something that helped you to progress further. Two to four situations will be enough. If you choose situations from different stages of the project, you can combine them to show the development in your team's cooperation.

You should analyse different type of situations, both when the cooperation is working well, and when it encounters difficulties. To reflect on why the cooperation is working well, and describe how each team member contributes to a good cooperation is difficult, but can provide useful insight. In all situations it is not enough to say that the cooperation is working. You have to reflect on why it is working.

2.2 Theory

In contrast to report writing in many other disciplines, the process report must not have a separate section describing relevant theories. Theories and concepts must be woven into the situation narratives. The theories that you highlight must be linked directly to the team's reflections, and are used to provide a general understanding of the situations you describe. The theory should provide a conceptual framework so that you can adequately describe the situations you have experienced. The theory might support what you have experienced in the team, or you might challenge it if it does not correlate with the way you experience your cooperation.

The video lectures and compendium provide a theoretical basis:

- The video lecture "Group Psychology ABC" by Turid Suzanne Berg-Nielsen is available on the EiT website.
- The EiT compendium is on sale at Tapir. For details, see the EiT website.

2.3 Reflections

Team-based reflections about the interaction in the team are a key to the student's development of teamwork skills. The experience of each team member and the development of the team should be highlighted through an analysis. The reflections may be related to

individual events or recurring issues that characterize the team. The whole team must be involved in the reflections, and must contribute to developing the process report. Writing logs, facilitation, and interactive exercises stimulate reflection.

The analysis of the situation should include:

- The individual team member's interpretation of their behavioural patterns and those of others in the situation in question.
- The team's reflections as to the appropriateness of the actions taken.
- The team's reflections about how the team members provided feedback to each other.

Reflection captures the team members' thoughts about a situation when they see it as a whole in retrospect. Reflection involves descriptions, evaluations, thoughts and feelings. It also involves asking questions about what one does and thinks, and answering them. The process of reflection enables the team members to discover and to learn something about themselves and the others in the team.

In the team log and the process report, it is especially important to show how the reflections gave the team members insight into their behaviour as well as into the dynamics and communication pattern of the team. Through reflection and analysis, you must show an understanding of what it takes to achieve the best possible project cooperation.

In EiT, interdisciplinary project work plays a vital role. How the interdisciplinary composition of the team influenced cooperation is therefore an aspect that you should include in your process report. What impact has this had on the communication in the team?

Most people are not accustomed to reflecting and getting feedback on their own attitudes, behaviour, and approach. So this will often create resistance, and it will be difficult to get started. Here, the facilitation offered by the learning assistants may be helpful.

2.4 Action

The process work is to improve the project cooperation, and can be achieved through:

- Changes in behavioural patterns in the team that resulted from reflection on an experience or situation
- The team continues and reinforces a measure that works to improve the cooperation based on an analysis of why it is working well.

Measures you take to improve project cooperation are called actions in the assessment criteria. Actions are in response to team-based reflections. Actions may be based on situations or events in the team that are perceived as positive or negative. It is important that the team evaluates the impact of the actions, and that the assessment is described in the process report.

If necessary, you need to show that you can change patterns of behaviour in the team to improve cooperation. In other situations, you can use something that has already been introduced (either by you or by the facilitator team) as your starting point. An action occurs when you identify a pattern of behaviour that contributes to effective cooperation in the team, and you take the initiative to maintain it or to practice so that you improve it.

Note that the ability to take actions that improve project cooperation is an important factor in the assessment criteria. To achieve an A grade, you must implement actions and evaluate them.

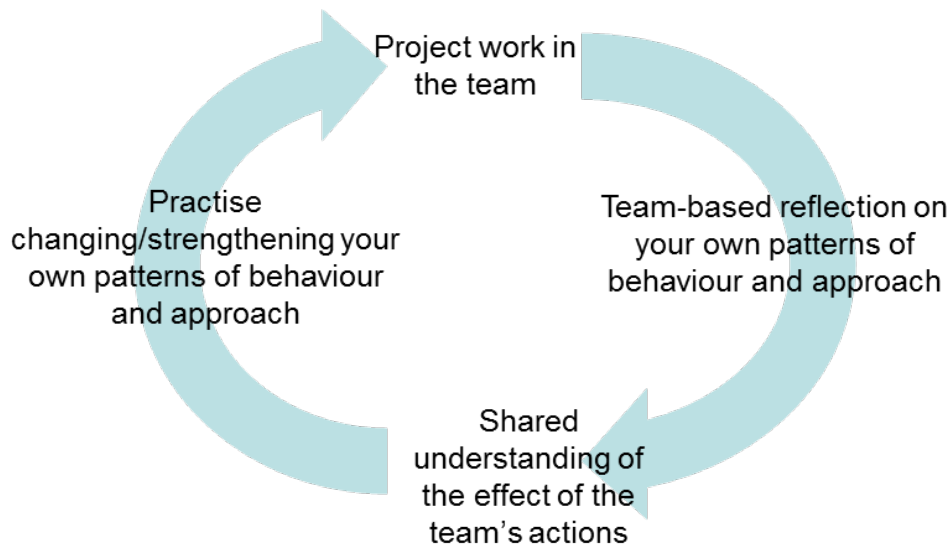
2.5 What do you gain from EiT?

The learning outcome in EiT is the development of effective team interaction – see the course description in Section 1.1. Through team-based reflections, you become aware of how you work together, and by taking actions you gain practice in improving cooperation. All this contributes to the development of teamwork skills.

As a summary in the process report, each student must reflect on how this experience has resulted in knowledge and skills that you can bring into a new cooperative activity.

3. Experience-based learning in EiT

The learning method in EiT is experience-based, in that students learn by working together on the project or on an exercise. The basis for the process report is thus the team members' experience from their cooperation, and their reflections based on their experience.



Facilitation, writing a log, and interaction exercises provide a framework to support students' experience-based learning

3.1 Facilitation

There are two learning assistants in each village facilitating the student teams. Facilitation involves observing and providing feedback to identify the team's communication and behavioural patterns. The facilitation creates the basis for team-based reflection on how the team members cooperate. The team *itself* is responsible for evaluation of the team process and to take action to improve the cooperation. Facilitation is the teaching method in EiT, and students must describe the outcomes of the facilitation in the process report.

3.2 Writing logs

The personal log and the team log form the written basis for the process report. In the logs, the immediate thoughts, feelings, questions, wondering, musings, etc. of the team members are written down, so that you have some material as a basis for your work. This provides the starting point for what the team has experienced and learnt from working together. The team should therefore set aside time to write a personal log and a team log every village day. The logs do not need to be very long or take much time to produce.

Personal log

To write a personal log, you need to explore a situation in a rich way from several perspectives by describing your reflections. The starting point for your log may be a situation, response, remark, or theory that you noticed during the day. You decide yourself how much of your personal log you want to share. The log is primarily a tool for your personal use. A form to help you write your personal log is attached at the end of this guide.

It is common to feel resistance to writing a personal log. Students are accustomed to assessment of what they write, so you may become too critical of your own writing. In EiT, however, writing a log is a tool for processing your own thoughts and to give you a meta-perspective on your cooperation. By putting your thoughts in writing, you create a distance that gives you an opportunity to start a dialogue with yourself. This dialogue is a prerequisite for experience-based learning.

Team log

The team log forms the basis for the process report, and communicates the team's cooperation process in writing. Team log should be written every day in the village. The starting point is each individual's perception of your teamwork, as each of you has described it individually in your personal log. Sharing the writing process helps you to understand the interaction in the team, and should reveal the gap between your individual thoughts and the thoughts of the other team members. Team-based reflection on the cooperation is the starting point for actions to improve the cooperation.

The team log should include a brief description of the situation, and may include theories about what was relevant for the team on that day. The reflections of the team members and the team's analysis of the cooperation are the most important component. The team log should also describe any actions that the team has taken based on the reflections.

Many teams find it difficult, perhaps especially at the beginning, to reflect and write about steps they have taken to improve their cooperation. So team logs tend to be dominated by situation descriptions. Such logs will not help you to write a good process report. From the start, the team should therefore try to reflect on situations that have arisen in the team during the day. The SITRA exercise, based on the assessment criteria in EiT, may help to make the team aware of what is reflection and action. If your team would like to try this exercise, you are welcome to ask the learning assistants about it.

3.3 Exercises to stimulate interaction

Interaction exercises stimulate reflection about interaction in the team, and help the team members get to know each other and build relationships. The purpose of the exercises used in EiT is primarily to encourage reflection. In cooperation with the village supervisor, the learning assistants will introduce you to a selection of the exercises during the semester or the intensive period.

Start-up exercises help to clarify how the students will work together in teams. It is important to draw up a cooperation agreement when you start to work. This can help to clarify each individual's expectations and ambitions for your teamwork. A list of keywords to help you develop a cooperation agreement appears at the end of this guide.

Reflective writing exercises contribute to make the team's cooperation visible, and provide important support for documentation of the teamwork process. Feedback exercises help you to express behaviour in words, and to talk openly about how it affects your teamwork.

Guide to writing personal logs

	EXTERNAL EVENTS Experiences, developments and processes – positive and negative	REFLECTIONS Thoughts, feelings, attitudes, learning
Re. YOURSELF	Note down situations, interpersonal episodes, things you or someone did or said that lingered in your mind. The events stirred something in you in relation to yourself – hurts, insults, surprises, exasperations, anger, or joy, contentment, satisfaction, or things that made you proud etc.	How do you understand or think about these responses of yours? How did they affect you emotionally, activate your values, strengths, aggressions or inhibitions, self-esteem, expectations etc.? How typical are these reactions? Where in your life have you experienced something similar? Would it be sensible to share your responses with the group to put things into perspective – or do you rather want to keep them to yourself, see them as irrelevant to your group relations?
Re. OTHER Individuals and persons in subgroups	Statements, behaviours and attitudes of others that made you react, that activated your thoughts, values and/or emotions in relations to those involved; episodes between group members, subgroup alliances, something individuals said, did or avoided. During the semester your notes should cover every group member (at least once). Subgroups are often implicit, spontaneous alliances between individuals. These alliances may be permanent or transitory. Who in the group tends to enter subgroup formations?	How did you react towards the other(s) in these instances – internally or externally? How would you explain their behavior whether you reacted personally, on behalf of others or related to the work to be done? How do you think, explain and feel about those involved – their behaviors, personality, emotions, propensities, and capacity for cooperation, values and expectations? Should your reactions be shared with the relevant individuals, brought into the group for discussion, as feedback? Or should you rather rest your case – if so why?
Re. THE GROUP Relevant events (single or repeated) characterizing the group	Episodes in the group, aspects or patterns of the group that are fairly permanent that you noticed, that linger in your mind, that activate something in you – irrespective of whether you find them positive or negative? Jot them down together with a quick assessment of their group relevance by putting one or several + or – signs in front of them.	What do your points tell about the group and its nature? Are the events parts of repetitive patterns? Do they inhibit individuals or the group in unfortunate ways – if so, to what extent? Should these issues be brought up for discussion, self-reflection and/or feedback within the group?

Developed by © Are Holen

Guide to the cooperation agreement

We recommend the team to set up a cooperation agreement early – the second village day may be a suitable time to do so.

The cooperation agreement will help you become aware of how you wish to cooperate in the team. The agreement should be as specific as possible in order to give you optimal opportunities to meet challenges that may turn up during the project period.

The agreement *may, among other things*, concern;

- Attendance (time, absence)
- Responsibilities
- Communication in the group (For example; What do you want the cooperation climate in the team to be like, and how will you contribute to creating it? How will the team handle possible disagreements?)
- Writing of log (personal log and group log)
- Schedule
- Deviation – who does what when there is a deviation concerning attendance, work, process and attitude/values

The cooperation agreement should be evaluated and possibly revised on a regular basis throughout the project period.