

# *Planning University Courses for Problem Oriented Project Based Group Work*

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# A different university and a different approach

- The university without teachers
  - There are teachers now
- The university without lectures
  - We have some now
- The university that was built on group work
  - It still is





# What is it like?

1. Teacher-supervised problem-oriented learning is a substantial component of all degree programs.
2. Project work in groups about academically and socially relevant projects, supported by theoretical and practical coursework, is the main approach to learning.
3. The students' personal motivations and interests are the foundation of all group projects.

Kim Christian Schrøder: "Communication Studies with a difference: a project-based approach" in *Feedback*, vol. 43, no. 2, May 2002.



# A few definitions

- Problem oriented
  - Student defined problems
  - Support from supervisors
    - Not necessarily experts
- Project based



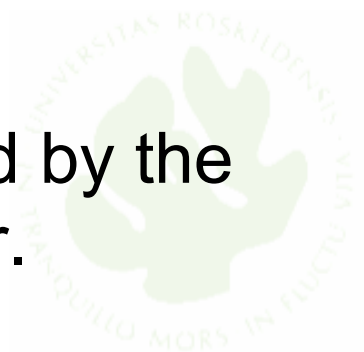


# How does it work?

During the semester, the student group will work together towards the 'solution' of the communication problem they started out with, in close consultation with the supervisor through weekly meetings, in which students' working papers and draft chapters are discussed.

At the end of the semester, after 4 months' work, the group will submit their project report for an oral exam.

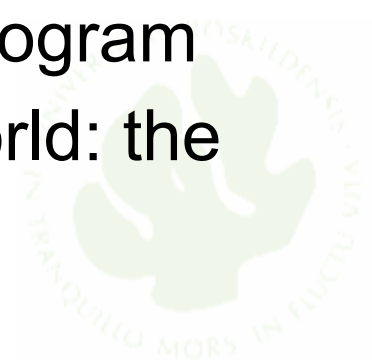
Here, their written and oral level of achievement is individually assessed by the supervisor and an external examiner.





# Examples of projects

- Courses are input to project work
- Planning a TV commercial for MTV: a global audience perspective
- Understanding the audience use of radio talk/music programs in everyday life
- How effective are websites for democratic participation in connection with a referendum?
- The design of a campaign to attract teenage viewers to an edutainment TV program
- Health campaigns in the third world: the case of the Danish Red Cross





# A different approach

- Group work
  - Not scheduled by the university
- Project oriented work
  - A novel way to study at a university
- Few courses
  - Courses are input to project work





# Group work

- **Group formation**
  - Supervisor guided group formation process
- **Group maintenance**
  - Frequent meetings with supervisor
- **Group strife**
  - Course in group processes
  - Course in academic writing (in order to convince sceptical students that we know what we are doing)
- **Individual exams**







# Project work

- Project definition
  - Find out what to work with
- Project delimitation
  - Making the project workable within a semester frame
- Project as learning principle
  - All projects are unique
    - In principle





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# Course planning

- Themes
- Foundation courses
  - Communication theory
  - Method, theory, analysis





# Courses in group work dynamics

- Addressing actual group work problem up front
- Negotiating terms for collaboration
- Discussing preferences
  - Theoretical
  - Methodical
  - Practical
  - Personal





# Standard courses

- Theory, Method and Analysis
  - One general course for all students
- Electives:
  - Journalistic Writing
  - Designing Communication in Performative Cityscapes
  - Organisational Communication
  - Video for Communication
  - Creativity and Innovation in Method
  - Communicating Risk
  - The Professionalisation of Political Communication
  - Dialogic Approaches to Communication in Practice and Theory
  - Intercultural Communication





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# Course work

- Short intensive courses of 1½ weeks in length
  - Inspiration to project work
  - Providing tools for project work
  - Providing theoretical framework for project work
  - Facilitate project work





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# Supervision planning

- Set supervision dates (for all supervisors/groups)
- Need-based meetings



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**Thank you for listening**

