

How to Plan the Village Days

Pages 41- 58 in the EiT book for 2015

How to Plan a Village Day (“Planlegge landsbydagene”, page 42)

The village supervisor and the learning assistants, known as the facilitator team, together plan the village days.

The experience-based learning model in EiT depends on each student team being responsible for their own progress regarding the project and process work. The facilitator team should set the conditions needed for the students to develop their project as well as reflect on cooperation within the team. When planning a village day it is therefore vital that each student team is given the time and opportunity to work on both their project and their team process.

The village supervisor and learning assistants’ co-manage the village days, meaning that they introduce and end the planned working sessions. A clear and concise plan for each day is a good tool for organizing the village days. The students are responsible for the work within their own team.

Phases during the Semester/ Intensive Period

The facilitator team may find it useful to make a plan for the whole semester/ intensive period when starting to plan the village days.

The EiT semester/ intensive period can be separated into three phases, each with its own focus:

- The Start Phase (village day 1-4)
- The Work Phase (village day 5- 12)
- The Completion Phase (village day 13- 15)

The start phase is all about establishing relationships and giving out information. Two vital activities in the start phase are deciding on a cooperation agreement as well as the team’s research question. In the work phase the students are actively working on their project as well as the cooperation within their team, while the facilitator team observe and facilitate. In the completion phase the focus is on completing the reports, discontinuing the village, and ending relationships. A calendar can be found on pages 12 and 13 in the EiT book.

Text box on page 43 in the EiT book

The Start Phase (“Oppstartsfasen”)

The students are supposed to:

- Get to know each other and the facilitator team
- Get the necessary information
- Be introduced to the concept of writing reflections
- Be divided into teams
- Map out competencies
- Make a cooperation agreement
- Develop the research question (propose a project)

The Work Phase (“Arbeidsfasen”)

The students are supposed to:

- Be observed and facilitated
- Present each other with different theoretical material
- Complete at least one individual feedback exercise and one exercise designed to map out the cooperation within the team
- Work interdisciplinary with their writing
- Work actively on writing reflections
- Revise the cooperation agreement
- Make a midway presentation of the project and have a midway team process dialogue

The Completion Phase (“Ferdigstillingsfasen”)

The students are supposed to:

- Get information about discontinuing the village
- Finish reports
- Make an oral presentation of the project and have a team process dialogue
- Be given the opportunity to complete the EiT survey
- Round off the cooperation with each other and the facilitator team

More information about each phase can be found further back in this chapter.

Milestones (“Milepæler”, page 44)

Experience show that it is a good idea for the facilitator team to define some milestones during the semester/ intensive period when it comes to both the project and the process work. An oral presentation of the project, a team process dialogues, and having the teams submit their work, has proven to be good examples of milestones. The students can in addition make their own milestones if they find it necessary.

Village Days with a Fixed Structure and Core Time

Even though the students are responsible for their own project and process progress, experience show that it is not a good idea to let them set the overall structure for the village days. It is not time efficient to have each team develop a successful structure for their work.

We recommend that each village day start off with a mandatory session (morning meeting) where the students can exchange information and make arrangements. Each village day should end with another mandatory session where the students write their reflections and sum up the day. Each team should hand in a written group reflection each village day for the learning assistants to read. The focus on writing reflections is to help the students make a habit out of it. This structure is a good starting point when planning the village days. The need to make a detailed plan of each day is usually more important in the start phase and the completion phase than the work phase.

The village supervisor should define a core time when all students need to be present in the village work space. The core time should at least average four hours each day. This is important for several reasons: First of all, an important goal for EiT is that the students get to experience working together as a team. They are to cooperate on their interdisciplinary project, not just hand in individual contributions. Second of all, the students together need to reflect on the cooperation in the team to reach the overall goal of EiT. To do this all the students in each team need to be together. It is also necessary for the students to be in the village work space so they can be facilitated by the facilitator team. Activities that separate the team members are best planned outside the core time.

Detailed Planning of Work sessions (page 45)

There will be need to plan some work sessions in more detail, especially when the facilitator team are to introduce a team cooperation exercise or project development exercise. A

selection of exercises suitable for EiT students is presented in the last chapter of the EiT book, along with suggestions on how to use them.

Tips Concerning Planning of the Village Days (page 45)

- Give each day a defined start, and arrange for an open and dynamic work phase during each day where the students are to work on their project and process. Contribute to a focused end to each day
- Make a daily plan with each activity listed along with a given time, people responsible, practical information and other notes to remember (an example of a daily plan can be found on It`s Learning)
- Let the students alternate between doing something together and reflecting on what has been done. The reflections can concern the cooperation within the team, individual feedback, work that has been done, how the work has been done and who contributed in different ways
- It is good for the students to alternate between individual work, working in smaller groups, and working in the village as a whole during long work sessions

The Start Phase (“Oppstartsfasen”, page 46)

During the start phase (village day 1- 4) the students are supposed to:

- Get to know each other and the facilitator team
- Get the necessary information
- Be introduced to the concept of writing reflections
- Be divided into teams
- Map out the team members competencies
- Make a cooperation agreement
- Develop a research question (propose a project)

There are many topics and processes the students should experience during the start phase. It is therefore important that the facilitator team have an elaborate plan for the village days, especially the first days. These first few village days are supposed to set the standard for the

EiT way of thinking, as well as introduce a pattern the students are to follow throughout the semester/ intensive period.

Focus on Relationships

In the beginning the focus should be on the relationships between the facilitator team and the students. There should be time and activities designed for the students to get to know each other. It is a good starting point if all team members are encouraged to make themselves visible to their team in the start phase.

It is vital that the village supervisor and the learning assistants are introduced to all the students in the village, along with a description of their functions and responsibilities as both facilitators and process leaders. Being facilitated is mandatory for the student teams, and the students need to have a clear understanding of the concept of facilitation for the facilitation to be efficient.

The facilitator role should be described during a plenary session on the first village day. Afterwards the learning assistants should visit the teams to answer questions and give a more elaborate account of their role. During the first village days the village supervisor and learning assistants should set up a plan with each team concerning their cooperation and how the facilitation is to be implemented in the team. Because the facilitator role is scarcely used in standard university praxis there is no harm in repeating the intention behind facilitation during the semester/ intensive period.

Information (page 47)

Experience shows that students have need of information when starting the EiT semester/ intensive period. We recommend the facilitator team to focus on giving out all relevant information in the start phase. Some of this information can preferably be given the first village day, but it is a good idea to divide the information into several blocks throughout the day. One would do well to repeat essential information several times during the semester/ intensive period.

Dividing Into Teams

The student team is essential to EiT, and the work in the team is basis for both the project and process part of the course. In EiT it is mandatory for each team to make a cooperation agreement during the first two village days, which means the students need to be divided into

teams on the second day at the latest. The village supervisor is supposed to decide the team composition (more information on page 33 in the EiT book).

Text box on page 47 in the EiT book

Tips to What Information the Students Need on the First Day

EiT in Context:

- Wants and needs from the business world
- Extensive use of teams in work life- the need for cooperation skills
- Interdisciplinary work- solve complex assignments and research questions
- Part of all NTNU Master programs- 2000 students each year
- 90% of the students are satisfied with the course

Goals and Assessment:

- Learning outcome
- Assessment criteria
- All team members must contribute

Work methods:

- Experience- based learning; learning by doing and reflecting on one's own experiences
- Facilitation
- Writing reflections
- Mandatory activities

Rules of Attendance:

- 8 am to 4 pm
- Core time

The Facilitator Team: -introducing their own role and responsibilities

- Village supervisor
- Learning assistants

Organization:

- Facilitator team
- Teaching assistant
- EiT staff

Plan for the Semester/ Intensive Period:

- Work phases
- Calendar with important dates and activities

Practical information:

- Dividing into teams
- Work space
- Access to printers etc.

Teaching material:

- EiT compendium
- Guide for EiT students
- Book of Reflections
- Lecture (“The ABC of Group Psychology”)

The Village Theme:

- Elaborating on the village theme
- Introduction of potential external partners

Introduction to Writing Reflections (page 48)

Many students are not familiar with the concept of writing reflections. The facilitator team should spend time in the start phase familiarizing the students with reflection writing.

It is a good idea to introduce reflection writing step by step. At the end of the first village day the students might be introduced to writing individual reflections, and at the end of the second day group reflections. The reason for this two-step approach is that the first day is usually packed with information and activities, leaving the students overwhelmed if they are

introduced to both ways of writing reflections on the first day. Also, in some villages the teams are not finalized until the second day.

Mapping Competencies (page 48)

The teams are supposed to develop a possible research question during the first few village days. The research question should be based on the village theme as well as the academic competencies found in the team. This requires the students to map out the individual competencies in the team, and then propose how their combined competencies can be implemented in developing the project.

It is important for the students to familiarize themselves with their own competencies when it comes to the village theme, and how to best use these competencies in the project work. “The Competency Triangle” exercise (p. 112 in the EiT book) is well suited for this purpose, and it is advisable to complete this exercise before starting work on the research question.

The Cooperation Agreement

Making a cooperation agreement is mandatory for all EiT student teams. For more information please turn to pages 18 and 114 in the EiT book.

The Project Work- Developing the Research Question (page 48)

The Village Supervisor should give an elaborate account of the village theme before the student teams start developing their research question. This should take place on one of the first three village days, but it is recommended to minimize the amount of lectures given on the topic.

If the village is cooperating with an external partner, the partner should visit the village during one of the first three village days. This is because the partner should contribute to the introduction on the village theme as well as give additional information when needed. The external partner will need to clarify their role when it comes to team guidance and follow-up, as well as suggest how the project results can be continued in the external partner organization.

The students usually start developing their research question the second or third village day. During this phase it is important that all suggestions are welcomed and appreciated. This is possible if the team establishes a climate of support and cooperation.

When it comes to generating ideas it is important that the team's process is not limited to one single idea, but embraces the input of all team members. The team is advised to wait until all ideas are on the table before they start the evaluation process. The fact that the students don't know each other that well will affect their cooperation, and the project development exercise called "Brainstorming" (p. 141 in the EiT book) can be helpful in the process of finding a research question.

When the students start deciding what they want to continue working on it is a good idea to activate the more passive students and moderate the more active students. This so everyone can feel equal ownership of the final research question. The project development exercises called "Essence Pieces" (p. 142 in the EiT book) and "De Bonos 6 Thinking Hats" (p. 146 in the EiT book) can be most helpful during this process. These exercises will make it easier for the students to find the essence in their own suggestions, and still have a discussion that is open to yet more possibilities.

The village supervisor's support and guidance is important for the student teams' work on both research question and project development. The students may have difficulties finding a research question where all team members are able to contribute with their individual competencies. The village supervisor needs to guide the students on their way to realizing the possibilities within their team.

The village supervisor should introduce the intentions and criteria for the project work early on. It is a good idea to give the students examples of possible products, and introduce research questions the students may use as inspiration in developing their own projects.

The village supervisor needs to approve each team's research question at the end of the start phase. The research question will then become the basis for the teams project work throughout the semester/ intensive period. If need be the teams may revise their research question during their work.

Examples of Days in the Start Phase (“Eksempler på dager i oppstartsfasen”, page 50)

To help in the planning the EiT staff proposes some examples on how to carry out the first few days.

Village Day 1:

Everything is new for the students when starting EiT, and many students find they only have superficial knowledge about the course. The facilitator team can ease the tension by giving out information about what is supposed to happen, the structure, rules and their role. The tension is eased further when the facilitator team organizes exercises designed for the students to get to know each other. The intention is to help the students in their early interactions.

The students are divided into teams after lunch, and are given the chance to get to know each other's academic background through “The Competency Triangle”. This exercise provides the basis for developing a research question, which is a good way of starting the project work. The first day ends with an introduction to writing personal reflections.

Village Day 2:

The students start the second day by watching a video recording of the lecture called “The ABC of Group Psychology” (available on the EiT website). This lecture will provide the students with valuable concepts they can use when describing their own team processes. It is a good idea to let the students discuss the lecture afterwards using examples from their earlier experiences with teamwork and cooperation.

After lunch the teams draw up a cooperation agreement (p. 18 and 114 in the EiT book), before the students are introduced to writing group reflections. Afterwards the students write personal reflections, and lastly they write group reflections that they hand in to the facilitator team.

Village Day 3 (page 51):

The third day starts off with a morning meeting and further introductions to the village theme. After the presentation the students do the exercise “Brainstorming” (p. 141 in the EiT book) to get yet more ideas for their research question.

After lunch the students keep working on the research question, now linking the work to the competencies earlier discovered during “The Competency Triangle”. This work ends in narrowing down the process, getting closer to finding out what they intend to keep working on. During this work session the learning assistants also give feedback to each team on the group reflections from the previous day. It is a good idea to give extensive feedback in the beginning because many of the students may be new to the concept of writing reflections. The day ends by writing another set of reflections.

Village Day 4:

The day starts as usual with a morning meeting. After the meeting the work continues on the research questions, and the students are encouraged to decide on a draft. Before lunch the students give each other feedback on their research questions by participating in a “Café Dialouge” (p. 125 in the EiT book). After lunch work continues on the research questions, while the village supervisor gives each student team feedback. The learning assistants observe the teams and facilitate when needed. The goal of the fourth day is to finish work on the research question. The day ends yet again with writing reflections.

Text box on pages 50-51 in the EiT book

Village Day 1

Focus on relationships and sharing information

08.00 Introduction of the Facilitator Team

Introduction of:

1. Experts in Team
2. Structure and rules
3. The Village Theme

“Getting to know each other”- exercises

11.30 LUNCH

12.30 The Competency Triangle

Introduction to writing personal reflections

Writing personal reflections

16.00 Sum up the day

Village Day 2

Clarifying roles and developing a cooperation agreement

08.00 Lecture (video recording)

Morning meeting: information and a post lecture discussion

11.30: LUNCH

12.30 Working on making a cooperation agreement

The Facilitator Team plan facilitation with each team

Introduction to writing group reflections

Writing both personal and group reflections

16.00 Sum up the day

Village Day 3

Develop a research question for the project

08.00 Morning meeting

Expand on the village theme

Work on the research question using brainstorming

11.30: LUNCH

12.30 Continue working on the research question

Feedback on yesterday`s group reflections

Writing both personal and group reflections

16.00 Sum up the day

Village Day 4

08.00 Morning meeting

Working on the research question using Café Dialogue

Working on the research question while the Village Supervisor gives feedback and the

Learning assistants facilitates the teams

11.30 LUNCH

12.30 Working on the research question while the Village Supervisor gives feedback and the Learning assistants facilitates the teams

Writing both personal and group reflections

16.00 Sum up the day

The Work Phase (“Arbeidsfasen”, page 52)

During the work phase (village day 5- 12) the students are supposed to:

- Be observed and facilitated
- Present each other with different theoretical material
- Complete at least one individual feedback exercise, and one exercise designed to map out the cooperation within the team
- Work interdisciplinary with their writing
- Work actively on writing reflections
- Revise the cooperation agreement
- Make a midway presentation of the project, and have a midway team process dialogue

The work phase includes fewer organized activities in the village, and the teams work independently for the most part. This gives the learning assistants more room to observe the teams while they are working, and facilitate according to the needs of each team. It is important that the village supervisor is available for guidance throughout the work phase, and follow up the progression in the teams.

Facilitation

The facilitator team should plan facilitation with each student team. Should there be an assigned time for facilitation each day, or should the facilitation happen during team meetings?

In the work phase the facilitation should be directed towards the needs of each team.

Presenting Theoretical Material (page 52)

Each team can be assigned an article for presentation from the compendium on the subject of team processes and dynamics. The teams should be encouraged to use examples from their own team process. Each team may also find three questions based on the article, and then have the other students discuss the subject for 10 to 15 minutes.

Presentations like these can be held each village day over a certain period of time. The purpose of this is to give the students; an introduction to relevant theory, practice in oral presentations, as well as activate questions related to their own cooperation process.

Feedback Exercises

Feedback exercises have proved effective because the students see them as relevant as well as stimulating for their continuing work. We recommend the students to complete at least one individual feedback exercise and one group feedback exercise during the work phase. The goal is to make the students able to give each other feedback independent from the facilitator team and feedback exercises.

Working Interdisciplinary on Writing (page 53)

The interdisciplinary way of working in EiT includes writing reports. If the students divide the writing between them, they still have to put it all together as a team to avoid a fragmented text. Arguments like “This is not my area of expertise” or “I have nothing to contribute to the project” are not valid. An interdisciplinary text should be written in a way so that all the participants understand it on a higher level. The village supervisor should encourage the students to continually read each other’s work to make sure the writing is accessible to all team members.

Writing Reflections

Most students are unfamiliar to writing reflections (p. 122 in the EiT book) and need to practice this way of writing. The learning assistants can introduce the SITRA- exercise to help the students grasp the concept of reflection writing. The students may be more motivated to writing reflections if they see the link between group reflections and the process report.

The first pages in the Book of reflections, that are given to the students the first village day, explains the concept of reflections. These pages may also be useful for the students in writhing of the process report.

Revising the Cooperation Agreement (page 53)

The teams should revise their Cooperation Agreements during the semester/ intensive period. This can happen when each team feels the need for it or when the facilitator team starts a joint process in the village, see page 116 in the EiT book.

Midway Presentations and Team Process Dialogues

The midway presentations should be a milestone in the village, where all the teams give an account on the status of their work. Each team should also have a midway team process dialogue with the facilitator team. Both milestones can be completed in one day, or it can take place over two days. The purpose behind this is to help the students prepare for the finish line, and it gives the teams practice in making presentations.

A Reference group and Reference Group Meeting

The village supervisor should organize a student reference group in the village. There are to be completed at least one reference group meeting during the semester (more on page 35).

Examples on days in the Work Phase (“Eksempler på dager i arbeidsfasen”, page 54)

To help you in your planning the EiT staff proposes some possible ways to carry out three of the days in the work phase.

These three village days follow the structure presented in the beginning of this chapter, by starting with a morning meeting and ending with a summary and reflection writing. The daily plan may vary however.

Village Day 6:

The student teams work independently before lunch. After lunch all student teams study “Schwarz` Ground Rules” (p. 100 in the EiT book) and revise their cooperation agreement.

Village Day 7:

After the morning meeting one of the teams presents a chapter from the process compendium for the rest of the village. Then the students do the “Group Dimensions” exercise (p. 118 in the EiT book). After lunch the teams work independently, before the day ends with reflection writing and a summary.

Village Day 10:

The students work independently in between the established activities at the beginning and the end of the day.

Text box on pages 54 in the EiT book

Village Day 6

08.00 Morning meeting

“Schwarz` Ground Rules” and a revision of the cooperation agreement

Independent work in team

11.30 LUNCH

Independent work in team

Writing both personal and group reflections

16.00 Sum up the day

Village Day 7

08.00 Morning meeting

Theoretical presentation

Feedback exercise: Group Dimensions

11.30: LUNCH

Independent work in team

Writing both personal and group reflections

16.00 Sum up the day

Village Day 10

08.00 Morning meeting

Independent work in team

11.30 LUNCH

Independent work in team

Writing both personal and group reflections

16.00 Sum up the day

The Completion Phase (“Ferdigstillingsfasen”, 55)

In the completion phase (village day 13-15) the students are supposed to:

- Get information about discontinuing the village
- Finish reports
- Make an oral presentation of the project and have a team process dialogue
- Round off the cooperation with each other and the facilitator team

In the last few village days the focus is on the completion of both project and process reports, and the learning assistants are supposed to facilitate the teams.

Information during the Completion Phase

It is a good idea to early give the students information about the program for the last village day (this includes giving new and relevant information as well as repeating previous important information).

Text box on pages 55 in the EiT book

Clues on what Information the Students should get at the Start of the Completion Phase:

The Team Process Dialogues

- Practical information

The project presentations

- Practical information

The reports

- Standards, how and when the reports are to be handed in

Assessment

- Evaluation, grades, appeal, censors

Completing Reports

The EiT project needs to be finished, and it is important that the village supervisor remains available for all student teams throughout this phase.

It is recommended to complete one last feedback exercise one of the last days in the village, where the students can give each other feedback. This may help the students reflect more in the process report, and give the students some constructive feedback to better their future work in teams.

Project Presentations and Team Process Dialogues

The project presentations and the team process dialogue are both important activities in the completion phase. It is a good idea for the village supervisor to carefully plan these two activities, and include the learning assistants.

For further reading on the project presentations and the team process dialogues please turn to page 18 in the EiT book.

Rounding Off the Cooperation

The way it is important to start a team process by focusing on relationships, it is equally important to end the team process the same way. It is also important to round off the student relationships for them to get the most out of the course. A way of making the last day in the village meaningful can be to order food and share in a fun activity.

Examples on days in the Completion Phase (page 56)

To help you in your planning the EiT staff proposes some possible ways to carry out the last three days of the completion phase.

Village Day 13:

The student teams work independently for the most part.

Village Day 14:

The teams work independently from after the morning meeting until lunch. After lunch the team process dialogues start. The Facilitator Team dialogue with each team in turn, while the other teams work independently.

Village Day 15:

The last day is used for the project presentations for the most part. The village day ends with a shared enjoyable experience. Remember that the student evaluations are usually done on the last village day.

Text box on pages 56 in the EiT book

Village Day 13

08.00 Morning meeting

Independent work in team

11.30 LUNCH

Independent work in team

16.00 Writing both personal and group reflections

Village Day 14

08.00 Morning meeting

Independent work in team

11.30: LUNCH

Team process dialogues for all the teams in turn

16.00

Village Day 15

08.00 Project presentations

11.30 LUNCH

Project presentations

The End. Thank you for cooperating

16.00

Teaching material (“Læringsmateriell”, page 57)

As a support for the student teams, EiT offer the following teaching material:

The Compendium

The EiT student compendium contains texts chosen with the goal to explain certain theoretical concepts- these texts are to work as a basis for reflection in the student groups throughout the course. The common focus in these texts are on describing and discussing group dynamics, as well as what makes an efficient group in different perspectives and how these are developed.

The compendium is for sale at Akademika for about 170 kr.

A tip: The student groups can be given the task of presenting theory to each other in turn. Please turn to page 52 in the EiT book for more information.

The Book of Reflections

All students are given a book of reflections. This book contains mostly blank pages where the students can write their personal reflections, but there are also some information about EiT, reflections and reflection writing.

A tip: Activate working with the book by letting the students read certain texts about the EiT way of learning, ask them to prepare questions for the facilitator team and talk together in the village (or with each group in turn).

A Guide for EiT Students (“Veiledning”)

There has been developed a guide for EiT students that includes an introduction to the course description, as well as student information on mandatory activities, the end result (the process and project report), the assessment criteria and grading. This is the same information as given in the chapter concerning framework (only it is written for the students).

A tip: copy and give out a set of the guidelines to each student one of the first village days, then refer to it throughout the semester/ intensive period.

The Lecture: “The ABC of Group Psychology”

There is a recording of the lecture “The ABC of group psychology” by Turid Suzanne Berg-Nielsen available for all students. This lecture provides some terms and examples on typical group dynamic phenomenon the students can use themselves when reflection over their own cooperation.

A tip: We recommend that the students watch this lecture on the second village day (see page 50 in the EiT book), but the facilitator team can also encourage the students to watch the lecture around village day 5 or 6 so as to give them the chance to link the lecture to their own experience with cooperation within EiT.

Another tip can be to prepare some questions the students can discuss in their teams before, during or after the lecture.

Information online Please go to www.ntnu.no/ EiT for more information