

# Collective supervision



Closing keynote, TAL conference 7 November 2024, SDU

# Outline

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1. Definition and examples
2. Benefits and challenges
3. Planning and conducting



# Definition

**Collective supervision:**  
Supervision of several students who are working and writing on **different** projects

**Group supervision:**  
Supervision of several students who are working and writing together on **the same** project.

# Examples

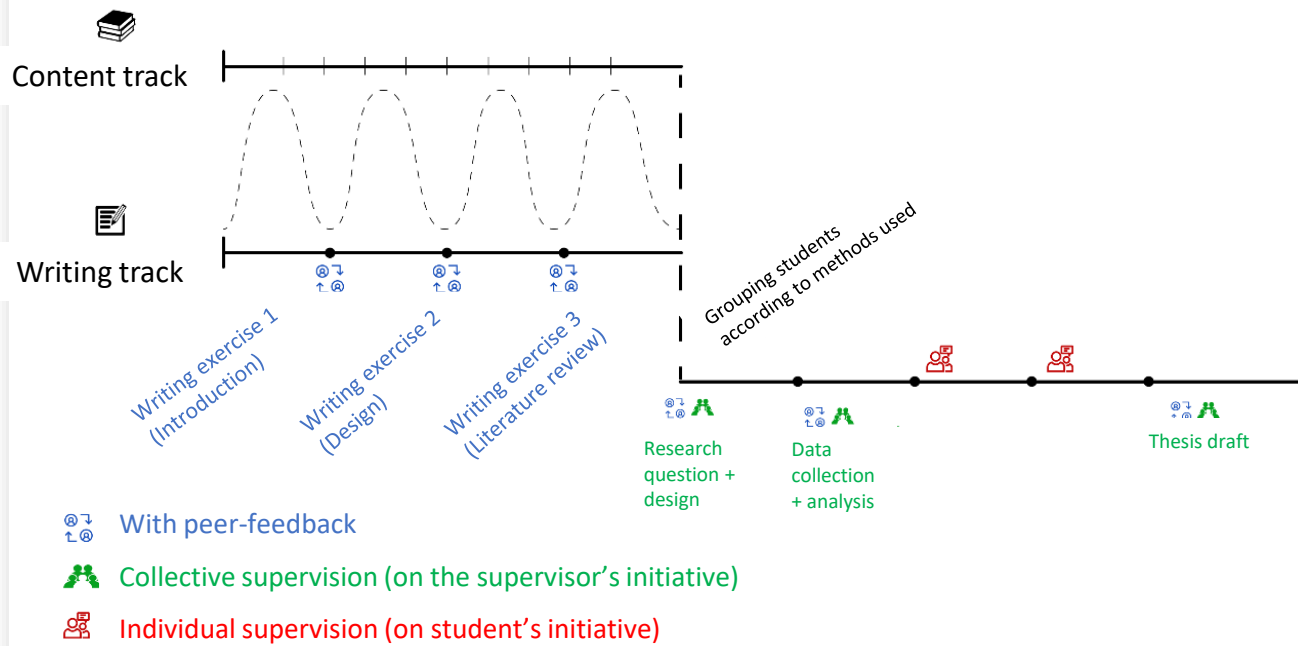
At BA, MA and PhD level, reepectively

# Example (BA)

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## Part 1: Teaching (2 months)

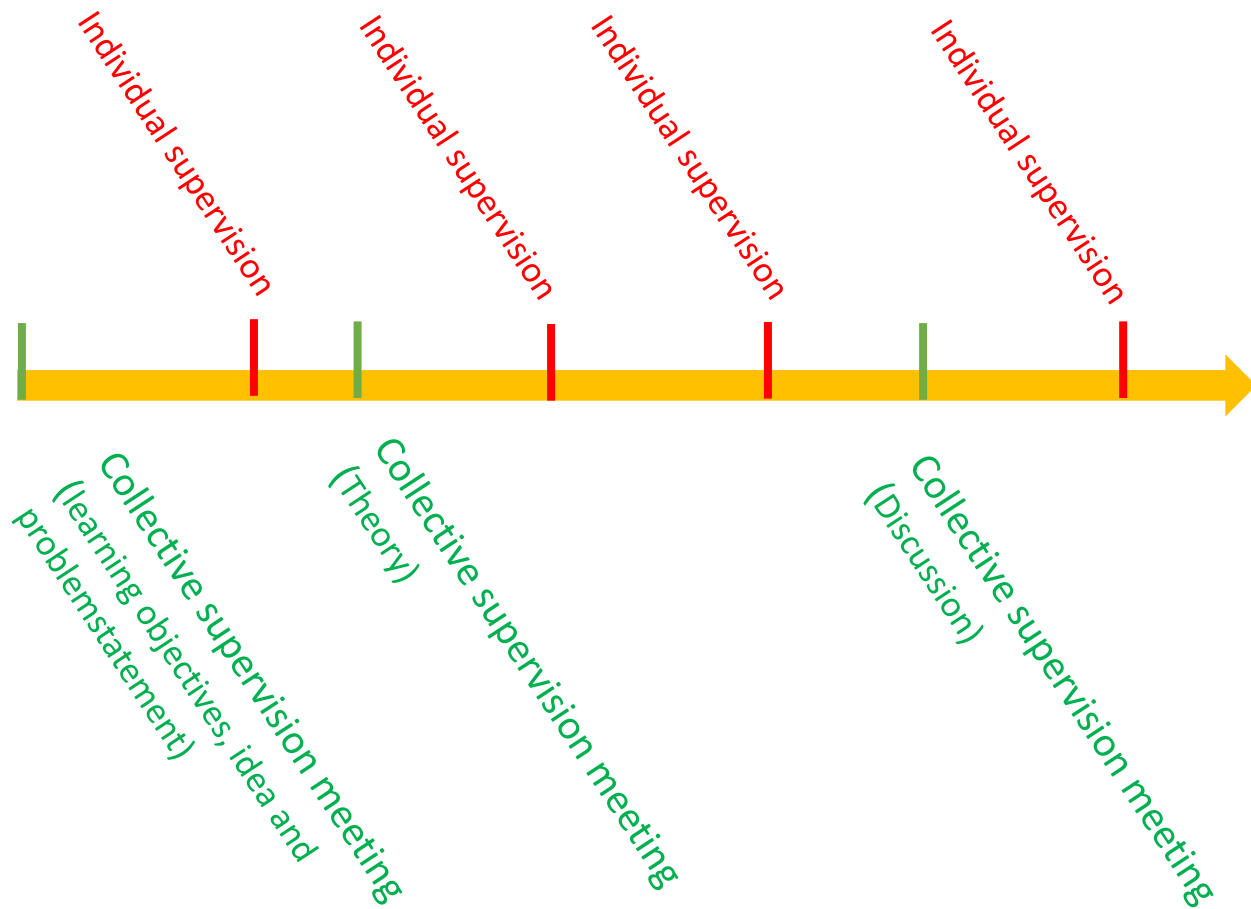
## Part 2: Supervision (2,5 months)



Political science, AU, Bachelor thesis supervision

[Simonsen & Wichmann-Hansen \(2019\)](#)

4 months



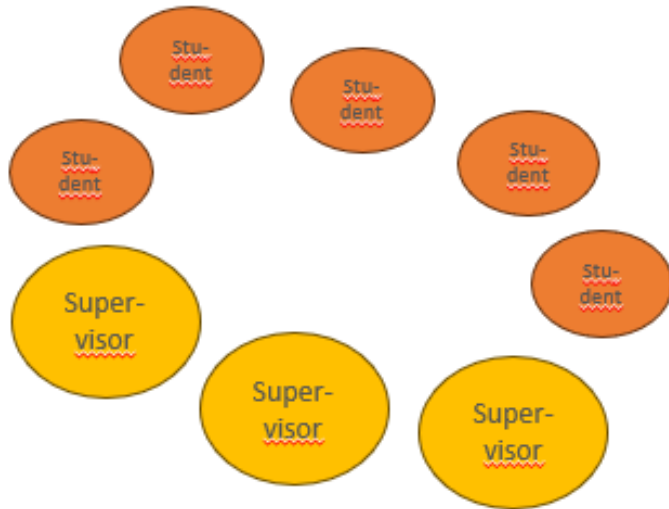
## Example (MA)

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Psychology, AU, Master's thesis supervision

[Wichmann-Hansen, Jensen, & O'Toole \(2020\)](#)





- Five PhD students (1. year - 3. year), within the same field
- Three main supervisors
- A joint meeting twice per semester; 2-3 hours

## Example (PhD)

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Department of Culture, Religion and Social Studies, USN, PhD Supervision

[Slåtto et al. \(2024\)](#)

## Benefits



- Writing progress (structure, predictability)
- Reduced social loneliness
- Boosted self-efficacy (mirroring)
- More active participation in meetings
- More feedback and inspiration
- Critical reflection and argumentation (peer-review)
- Better insight into scientific criteria



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Increased systematic use of time, calmness, less iteration of information.

## Challenges

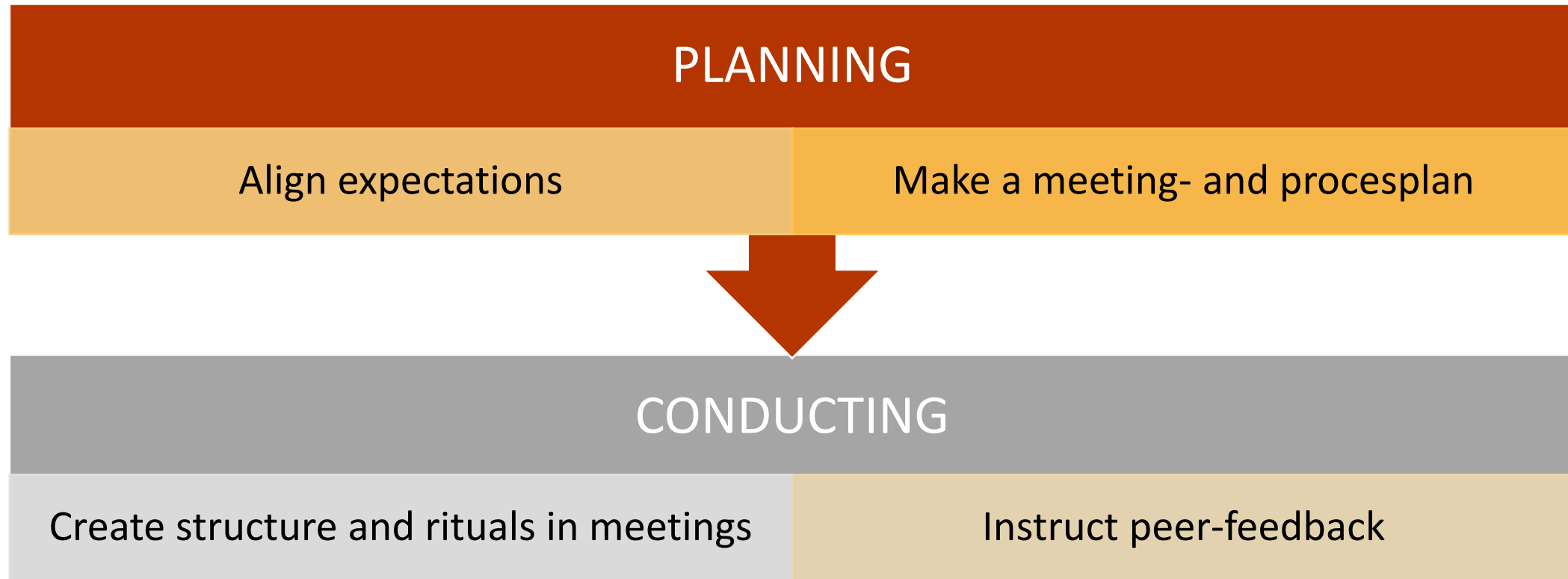
- Lack of flexibility and individual needs/pace
- Finding time to invest in peers
- Give qualified/useful feedback to peers
- Unclear how to use comments not coming from the supervisor

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Difficult to adapt to different needs and levels, to 'convince' students about the value of peer-feedback, to handle unprepared students, and to plan, prepare and coordinate early on.



# Planning and conducting



# Align expectations

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E.g., Absence from a collective meeting is not replaced with an extra individual meeting.

Clearly communicate why and how you do collective supervision:

- Give a "sales pitch" about the benefits (you are welcome to use my slide 😊)
- Describe the format in a *supervisor letter* (see an example [here](#))
- Inform students about your expectations for them, particularly about participation and preparation

# Make a meeting- and process plan

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... for the **whole semester/project period**, incl. project milestones and deadlines for drafts

# Example of a meeting plan

When?	What?	Preparation
January 10, 13-14 Room x	Introduction seminar: Expectations and "The good thesis"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read the curriculum</li><li>• Read the introductory letter</li><li>• Answer the 4 questions about your expectations (on Canvas)</li><li>• Read Rienecker's book "The good thesis", Chap. 10</li><li>• Write down your three best writing advice and bring them to the meeting</li></ul>
February 5, 10-12 Room x	Choice of topic and problem statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read the online brief intro about a good problem-statement (<a href="#">link</a>)</li><li>• Upload your draft problem statement by <b>February 2</b></li><li>• Read your peers' drafts and prepare feedback, see instructions on Canvas</li></ul>
March 15, 13-15 Room x	Methodology and research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See my brief video on methodology</li><li>• Upload draft methodology section by <b>10 March</b></li><li>• Write down one key question that puzzles you regarding methodology on the Blog on Canvas</li></ul>
May 15, 13-15 Room x	Analysis and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See my brief video on a good discussion section</li><li>• Upload a draft for your discussion section by <b>May 12</b></li><li>• Read one of the drafts and prepare feedback. See instruction on Canvas</li></ul>
June 1 , 11-12 Room x	Info meeting and Q&A about the oral exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No preparation</li></ul>

# Planning and conducting

## PLANNING

Align expectations

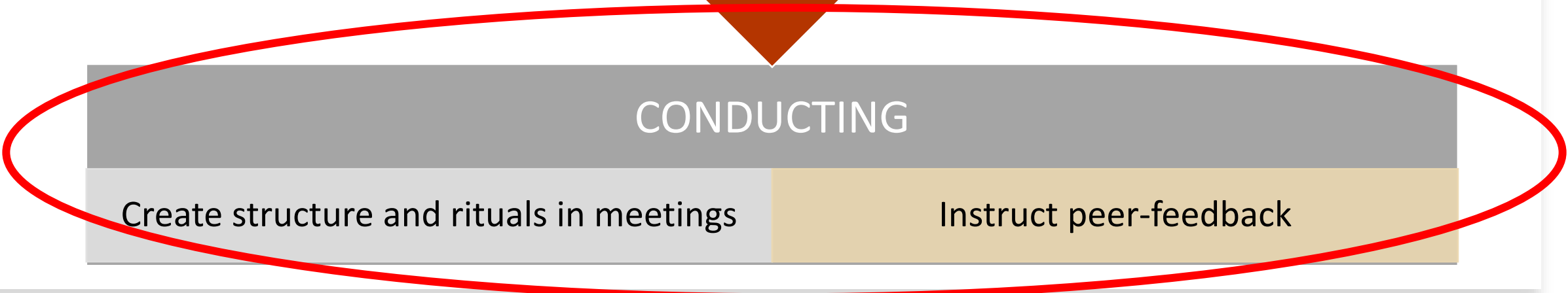
Make a meeting- and procesplan



## CONDUCTING

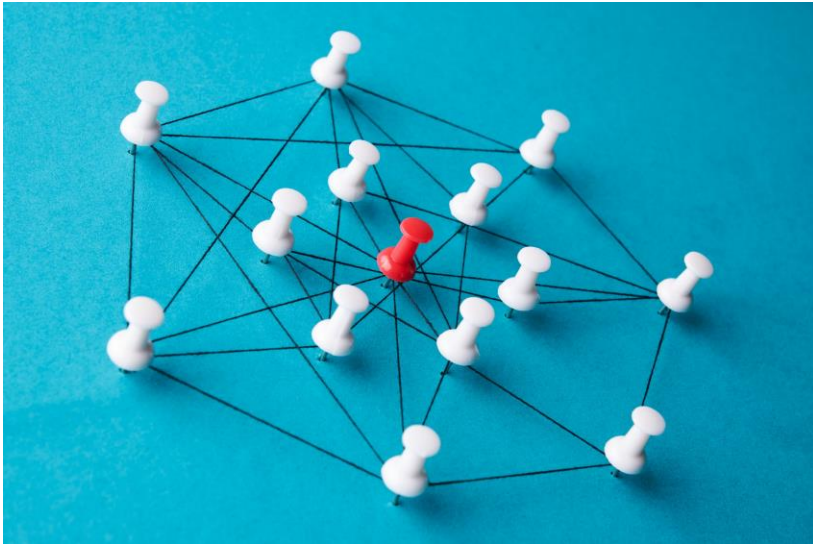
Create structure and rituals in meetings

Instruct peer-feedback



# Create structure and rituals in the meetings

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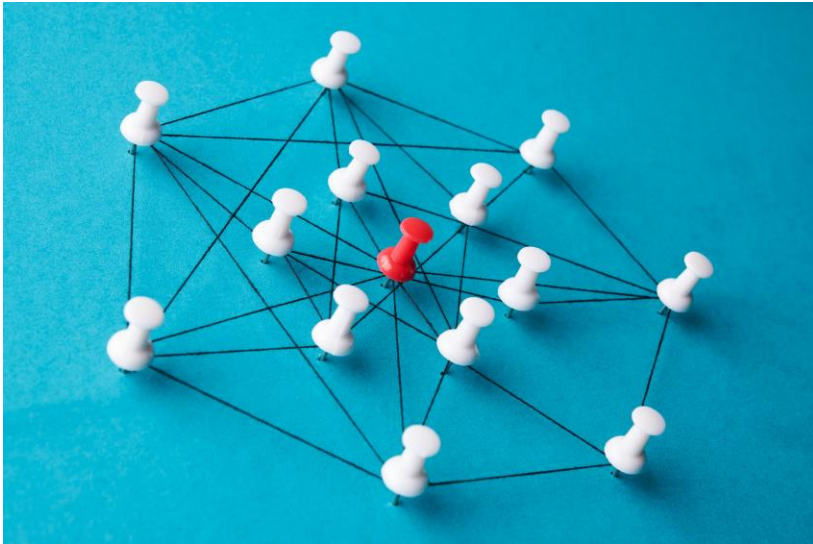


## Example

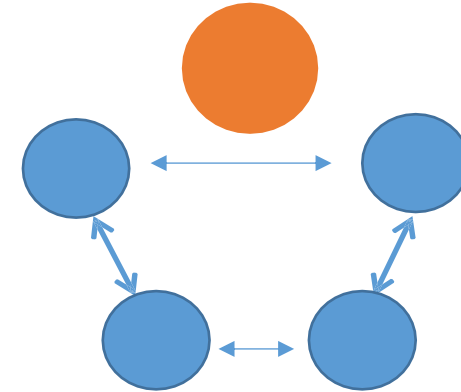
1. Welcome and agenda (5 minutes)
2. Feedback round (15 minutes/person. In total 60 minutes)
3. Individual writing time. Everybody writes on their texts based on feedback from this meeting (20 minutes).
4. Closing round. Everybody answers the question "What is my next step?" (15 minutes)

# Create structure and rituals in the meetings

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Organise peer-feedback in pairs. Not everyone has to give feedback to everyone!



But ensure that everyone has a role/function:

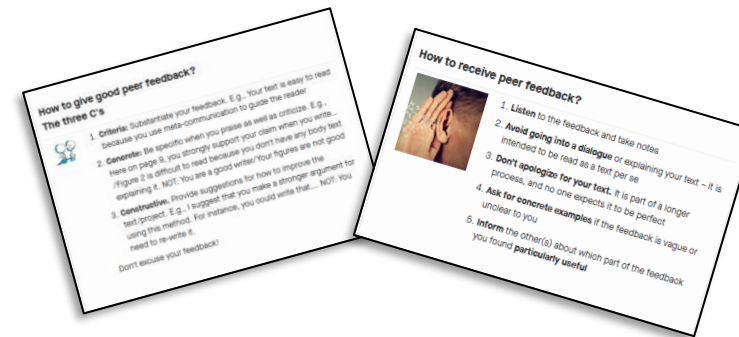
- *Take notes and debrief for your peer*
- *Note down what you heard that can be transferred to your thesis*

# Instruct peer-feedback

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- ✓ E.g.: *In case you don't manage to prepare peer-feedback, you are welcome to participate in the meeting anyway, but as an observer and without receiving feedback on your own draft.*
- ✓ Consider to give students different feedback roles: 'devil's advocate', 'supporting mum', 'critical examiner', 'football only giving instructions/advice', ...
- ✓ Inform about good peer-feedback rules early on. See for instance these simple instructions for [download](#):





# Home task 😊

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- Draw a meeting- and procesplan: When and how often will you meet with the students?
- How will you organise the meetings (structure, rituals, ....)?
- What kind of drafts – and how many pages – should students give peer-feedback on?



# Ressource site

<https://edu.usn.no/utvikle-din-undervisning/veiledning/kollektiv-akademisk-veiledning/>



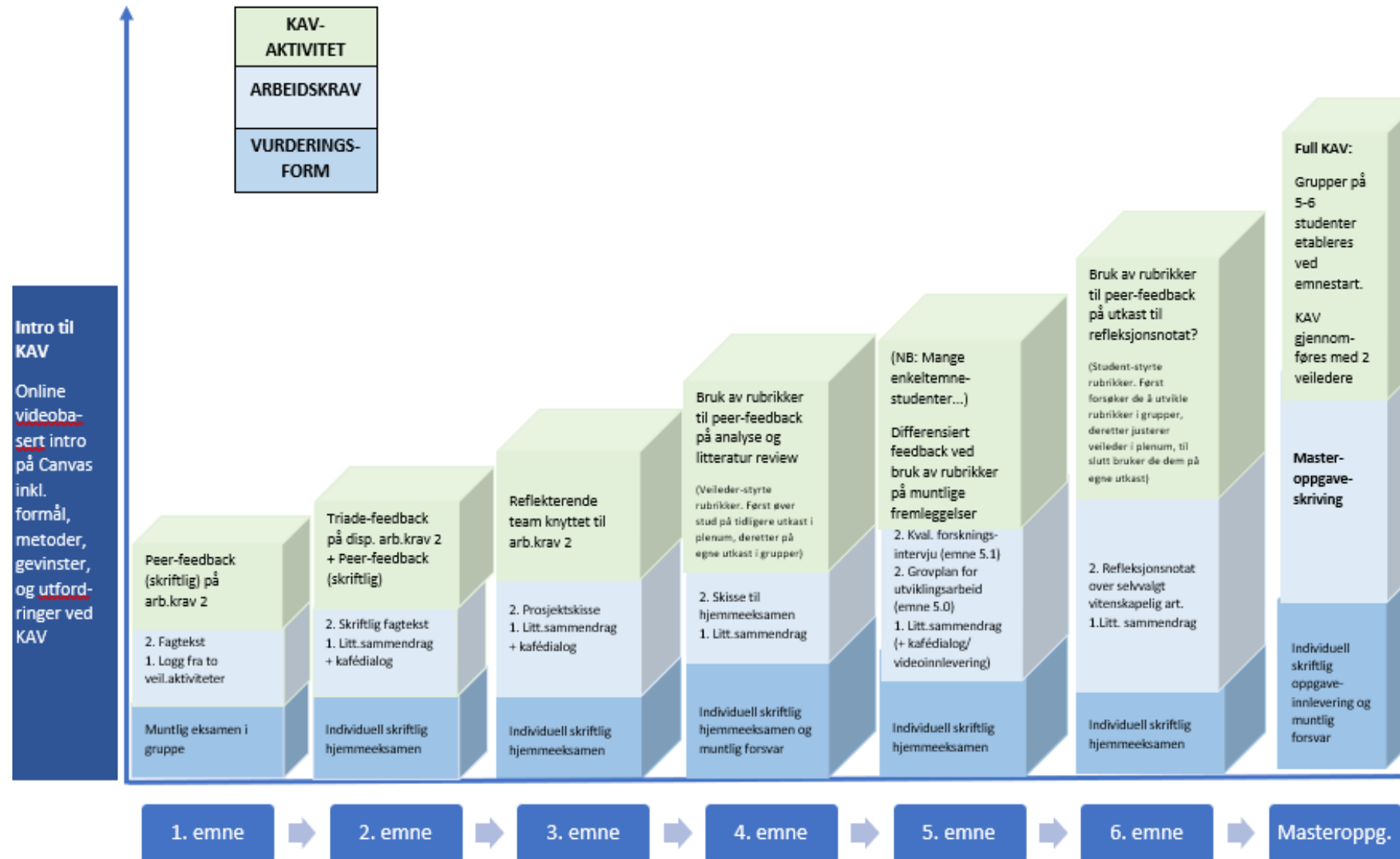
# Want to know more about implementation of collective supervision?

A DIKU-financed project at USN in Drammen, Norway

[https://www.usn.no/forskning/prosjekter/  
andre-prosjekter/kollektiv-akademisk-  
veiledning/](https://www.usn.no/forskning/prosjekter/andre-prosjekter/kollektiv-akademisk-veiledning/)



# Gradual implementation of collective supervision and peer-feedback in a study programme



Thanks for listening



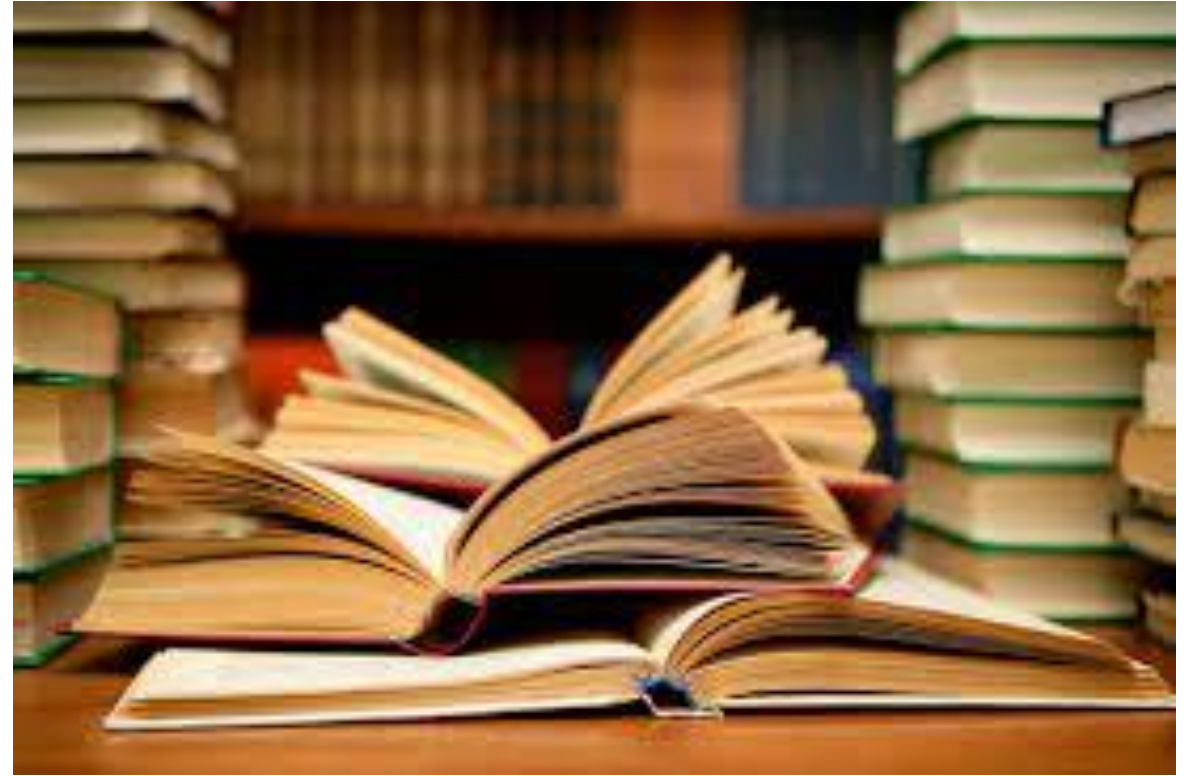


Questions?

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