

CHAPTER 1

FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE: ADVANCING RESEARCH LITERACY AT OSLOMET, NORWAY

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National Context for Teacher Research Literacy Policy

In Norway, teacher education is offered through several different programmes across universities and university colleges. The main model is a five-year integrated master's degree in primary and secondary teacher education for grades 1-7, 5-10, or 8-13, as well as in practical and aesthetic subjects for grades 1-13. Vocational teacher education is structured as a 3-year bachelor's degree. Additionally, candidates already holding a bachelor's or master's degree can complete a one-year practical-pedagogical education to qualify as teachers. The cases discussed in this chapter pertain to the five-year integrated master's programmes (*Master i grunnskolelærerutdanning*, hereafter MGLU) in primary and lower-secondary teacher education for grades 1-7 and 5-10. These programmes, introduced in 2017, replaced the previous four-year bachelor's degree structure.

In Norway, research literacy in teacher education is defined as “the skills of finding, understanding, assessing, using and contributing to research” (National Council of Teacher Education (NRLU), 2016, p. 11). It is seen as a core component of professional knowledge in both initial teacher education and continuing professional development, and, crucially, in teachers' everyday practice (Munthe & Rogne, 2015; NRLU, 2016). The National Guidelines (NRLU, 2016) require all students to complete a research and development

(R&D) project related to a school subject before they can start on their master's thesis. Furthermore, the guidelines specify that "theory of science and research methods should be introduced early in the programme. There shall be progress in the topic throughout the education programme" (p. 11). Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet), the site of the cases discussed in this chapter, has implemented the requirement of integration and progression in the form of an R&D pillar embedded in the five-year teacher education programme. This structure begins with observation during teaching practicum and academic writing in the first year, continues with R&D exam papers in the second and third years, includes a 15-credit Theory of Science with Methods course in the fourth year, and culminates with the master's thesis in the fifth year.

Teacher education in Norway aims to bridge theory and practice through research-based and development-oriented teaching. Teacher education institutions participate extensively in school development initiatives and educational research. Nevertheless, teacher education is often criticised for fragmentation – both across learning arenas (campus and schools) and between components such as professional knowledge (pedagogy, subject didactics) and disciplinary knowledge (Ulvik & Smith, 2019). This tension between the different forms of knowledge has a long history in higher education, as outlined by Muller (2009). Teacher education programmes continue to face challenges in achieving coherence and integration across these knowledge domains (Afdal & Spernes, 2018; Caspersen & Smeby, 2023; Hermansen, 2019).

The increased emphasis on research literacy introduced by the 2017 reform seems to have amplified this fragmentation. Recent studies on student teachers' development of R&D competence demonstrate persistent tensions between university-based and practicum-based learning (Aalbergstjø et al., 2023; Goldshaft et al., 2022; Thorsen & Lundberg, 2021). Further, stakeholders hold diffused and varied understandings of the role of research within the different learning arenas of teacher education (Goldshaft et al., 2022; Pajchel et al., 2021; Smestad & Gillespie, 2020). Thorsen and Lundberg (2021) highlight that research literacy and professional practice remain poorly integrated and emphasise the need to strengthen the "D" in R&D – namely, the role of research literacy in teachers' professional development. In response, the Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research (2018) has called for a shared definition of research literacy in teacher education and in schools. However, despite these policy intentions, Norwegian teacher education programmes have yet to establish a mutual understanding (Thorsen & Lundberg, 2022).

OsloMet Local Cases

Introduction Case 1

This case describes a class taught by Instructor 1 within a 15-credit English subject module (OsloMet, 2023). It constitutes the final 15 credits of a 60-credit English course available to students in the MGLU programme for grades 5-10 (MGLU5-10, 300 ECTS) during their first study cycle (previously the bachelor level). Students take the first 45 credits (Modules 1-3) in their first year and the remaining 15 credits (Module 4) in the fall of the second year. Concurrently, they take 15 credits of pedagogy in both the first year and the fall of the second year.

At OsloMet, students in the MGLU5-10 programme select English, Norwegian, or Mathematics during their first two years, with their initial experience of independent research work occurring in the third semester. In accordance with the National Guidelines (NRLU 2016), the assessment English Module 4 consists of a term paper presenting small-scale research – either an empirical study or a literature review – on a self-selected problem. The paper may be written individually (5,000 words), in pairs (7,000 words), or in groups of three (9,000 words). Thus, this module integrates several forms of knowledge (Hermansen, 2019, 2020; Muller, 2009): professional knowledge (subject-specific didactics), disciplinary knowledge, students' English competence, and research literacy. It also encompasses all aspects of the research-teaching nexus by being research-informed, research-led, research-tutored, research-oriented, and research-based (Griffiths, 2004; Healey, 2005; Healey & Jenkins, 2009). Students commence work on their term paper at the start of the semester, with all the classes and course requirements designed to support their research and writing process.

The module spans twelve weeks, with an additional three weeks of teaching practicum scheduled towards the end of the term. In-class activities consist of 58 hours of mandatory attendance supplemented by 12 hours of optional writing sessions. The first half of the semester features more in-class activity, while the second half prioritises self-study, data collection, analysis, and writing. Lessons are designed to be student-centred, with minimal traditional lecturing. Students are expected to complete preparatory readings and tasks before class. Many classes take the form of workshops guiding students through key stages of their research paper, including project proposal, peer review, literature search, data collection planning, and so on (see Appendix for the term outline). During weeks

5-8, students must attend classes related to the research methods employed in their projects, though they are encouraged to participate in all sessions.

The TREL observed class was the first of two two-hour Project Proposal Workshops held in week three of the module. It marked the start of research-oriented and research-based activities, following two weeks of research-led and research-tutored classes on topics in English subject didactics. The aim of this class was to initiate students' project work by guiding them in selecting a topic, refining their research question, and justifying its relevance for English language teaching in Norway. The class focused on the introduction, research question, and theoretical background sections of the project proposal, while the second workshop addressed research methodology and ethical considerations. Class activities included familiarising students with the proposal format and requirements through model text analysis, collective brainstorming on the nature and creation of the research question formulation using Padlet, and a five-minute free writing exercise on a chosen research topic, which they shared with a partner. The class concluded with students drafting an outline for their project proposal and beginning the writing process.

Feedback received from the observers

Instructor 1 received the most salient feedback in three areas: students' engagement and interaction patterns, tasks and instruction, and content.

Students' engagement and interaction

Several observers questioned the use of Padlet to elicit student responses and noted limited student-teacher interaction beyond Padlet use or one-to-one exchanges during individual writing. Instructor 1's choice of Padlet was made based on prior experience with this group: they were known as reluctant speakers in whole-class discussions but were more willing to engage in smaller groups or in written form. This rationale underpinned the use of paired and group brainstorming for research questions and anonymous topic suggestions via Padlet – strategies intended to lower students' affective filter early in the process. These participation formats also allowed students to share examples and enabled the teacher to respond and adjust to students' needs in real time.

Tasks and instruction

Observers noted that teaching effectively “unfolded” the research process by providing opportunities to discuss variation at different stages and consistently “bridging” different tasks with the requirements of the final research paper. Each

teaching moment was situated within the broader research process and aligned with the course activities (see Appendix for selected presentation slides). Instructor 1 sees this as positive feedback on the design of the chosen tasks and the commitment to coherent instruction that explicitly connects procedural steps in the process, course progression, and the structural expectations of the final paper. Instructor 1 acknowledges the difficulty of supporting beginner students in comprehending the research process without overwhelming them, especially as this is their first time conducting research and reporting research of this scope. To address this challenge, the instructor employs a stepwise approach (see Appendix), dedicating as much time as the course allows to each step. This approach is intended to develop a sense of mastery and sustain student motivation throughout the process.

Content

One observer questioned Instructor 1's suggestion that RQs could be adjusted after data collection if the data answered a slightly different RQ. The observer argued that such an approach might reflect "poor" methodological design, data collection, and/or literature review. As a researcher, Instructor 1 agrees with this critique from a research perspective. However, in a teaching situation, this decision was informed by students' novice status and the time constraints of their small-scale research. Therefore, the assessment of the research paper prioritises students' ability to understand and systematically carry out research, while critically reflecting on project limitations and challenges. This includes articulating what changes they would have made, or how they should or would have done things differently in response to the original or revised RQ. These initial research goals differ from those of publishable, peer-reviewed studies. However, an important takeaway is the potential risk of fossilising this beginner-level approach to RQ formulation as the students' progress towards more advanced research work, such as the master's thesis.

Critical insights into practice given the received feedback

Observer feedback and Instructor 1's reflections reveal three key issues in developing early-stage research literacy: a) determining how and when to highlight differences between beginner-level and professional research decisions and performance; b) managing a complex research process while allowing for individual variation; and c) socialising novice researchers into the epistemic practices of a research community, its ways of thinking, being, and doing. Each issue highlights the inherently iterative, trial-and-error nature of learning to perform appropriately in the largely unfamiliar role of researcher.

To contextualise novice research performance, Instructor 1 highlights the unique characteristics of student research using past examples and emphasises research feasibility within time and textual constraints. These examples illustrate how student research differs from the professional research students may read when preparing their research papers. Revising research questions after data collection illustrates the trial-and-error nature of the novice researcher, where critical reflection on the challenges and limitations of research choices constitutes an integral part of research paper assessment. While this focus allows for greater awareness of aspects of research students might approach differently – such as clearer formulation of research questions or more systematic data analysis – Instructor 1 acknowledges that such reflection must not only be made explicit but also followed up later in the process as students move towards more advanced research work. Failure to address these issues may lead to less rigorous or unsound research practices in the future.

Secondly, Instructor 1 not only provides an overview of the whole research process but also delineates its stages to support students in getting started. This approach combines both holistic and immediate perspectives, thus accommodating diverse learner needs and approaches to research. By discussing examples that illustrate different possibilities and variations, she seeks to prevent students from adopting a very narrow view of the research process and instead encourages more creative thinking and informed choices. Finally, to ease students' initial engagement with research, Instructor 1 creates opportunities for them to experiment with various research topics and questions anonymously in a digital environment and within the safety of smaller groups. Such participation also allows her to monitor student performance and adapt teaching to their emerging needs and concerns as novice researchers.

Introduction Case 2

This case focuses on a class taught by Instructor 2 within a 15-credit English subject module, English and English Didactics 3 (EngDid3), offered in the fall semester of students' fifth year (second study cycle). It constitutes the final 15 credits of the English module in the teacher education programmes for grades 5-10 and 1-7 (MGLU5-10 and MGLU1-7, 300 ECTS), preceding commencement of the master's thesis in the spring semester of the same year. The module builds on 60 credits from the first cycle and 30 credits from the second, amounting to a total of 105 credits in English. The module is designed to facilitate the development of advanced proficiency in academic writing in English. It provides

students with the opportunity to develop a critical approach to various aspects of the curriculum for primary and lower-secondary school, with an emphasis on English as a subject. Students are expected to deepen their knowledge of the English subject and its didactics while acquiring in-depth knowledge of relevant research, theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, scientific reasoning, and ethical considerations.

Within the module, students learn how to critically analyse national and international research and apply this knowledge to professional practice. Further, students learn to evaluate relevant academic and ethical issues, aiming to contribute to the development of academic communities at the local school level. This includes the systematic planning, evaluating, and revision of English language learning programmes. Through student-led seminars, participants present and discuss academic literature, focusing on self-selected research articles. A central component of EngDid3 is the preparation of a project proposal and a comprehensive review of relevant research literature, serving as a foundation for the subsequent master's thesis. Course requirements include submission of these components and completion of a 30-minute individual oral examination based on self-selected readings that inform the thesis work to be completed in the following semester.

The observed session was the first of two two-hour workshops on empirical research, taught during the second week of the module. This workshop introduced several classes addressing English subject didactics and research methodology. Its primary aim was to engage students in conceptualising and applying empirical research relevant to their projects. Students worked on identifying key characteristics of empirical studies in their literature review, justifying these studies' relevance and establishing connections between them and their own research foci. The session focused on defining empirical research, distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative research methods, formulating RQs, and understanding research literature sections. Activities included familiarisation with definitions and methodological approaches, identifying empirical research in academic texts, and aligning project proposals with the requirements of such research.

Students initially worked individually and then in small groups to distinguish empirical research papers from theoretical papers, analyse their structure and content, and relate these findings to their own empirical research projects. The session concluded with an opportunity for students to reflect on and connect

principles and practices of empirical research to their own research proposals. These activities built on students' prior experience and foundational knowledge, as they had previously completed short research papers in their third and fifth terms and earned 15 credits in a Theory of Science and Methods course in their seventh term.

Feedback received from the observers

Instructor 2 received feedback around three areas: content, tasks and instructions, and supporting student research efficacy.

Content

Most observers agreed that the purpose of the research was effectively conveyed in the definition presented on the slides. However, a few expressed concerns about using a Wikipedia definition of research. Despite alternative definitions in the literature, this was a conscious choice. The selected definition offered key terms – such as collection, organisation, and analysis – which aligned with the subtopics of this session. Instructor 2 considered this an effective way to introduce the lesson and frame the discussions that followed.

Tasks and instruction

Observers noted that distinctions between empirical and theoretical research, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, online and web-based research methods, and different types of data analysis were effectively presented and reinforced through an interactive student task and a “mini quiz”, which initiated discussions among students. Moreover, observers praised the use of a video that aimed to identify features of empirical research articles, among other issues. This video was carefully selected and integrated into the session to consolidate students' existing knowledge and support their engagement with scholarly literature. This activity was directly linked to an in-class exercise where students analysed the titles and abstracts of several pre-selected articles to determine whether the research was empirical. Students seemed to have found the task both relevant and engaging. At this point, further resources were introduced, including a link to an entrepreneurial master's thesis from OsloMet, which was a new and challenging type of master's thesis for the students.

Supporting student research efficacy

Having been challenged very often on how to support students' motivation and perseverance in the task of preparing and working toward the completion of their master's thesis, Instructor 2 included a visual representation depicting basic

research phases as a way to allow students to reflect on their own progress and identify the steps that remained. The group work task, applauded by the observers, aimed to strengthen students' research confidence and indicate ways forward for their work.

Critical insights into practice given the received feedback

Feedback from observers and reflections from Instructor 2 reveal two key issues in developing research literacy and self-efficacy among late-stage teacher-researchers. The first issue was developing a clear understanding of the research purpose and identifying finer distinctions in research orientation, such as empirical versus theoretical approaches, methodological choices, and the form of data analysis. The second issue was fostering autonomy in navigating the research process, including acknowledging completed work, identifying remaining work, and planning next steps. Both issues highlight the importance of refinement, self-reflection, and independence in the research practices of late-stage student-researchers.

Firstly, the definition of research at this stage emphasised not only the purpose of conducting or reporting but also the rationale behind research choices – such as selecting a methodological approach, determining methods of investigation, and making textual choices in empirical research articles. Framing “research” as a set of researcher purpose(s) and choice(s) can enhance students' awareness of their own decision-making and its application. To achieve this, students engaged in actively identifying empirical versus non-empirical research articles by analysing defining features evident in titles and abstracts. This actively consolidated previous knowledge and provided late-stage student researchers with opportunities to practice the skill independently with the support of peers or the instructor. Awareness of researcher choices was further reinforced through an interactive sorting task and “mini quiz”. These engaging and interactive activities were designed to promote greater integration with – and possible alignment to – the research and writing practices of the larger research community. Following these exercises, students were offered additional optional resources intended to further support their research practices.

Secondly, the phases of the research process were reviewed using a visual representation (see Fig. 1). For late-stage research literacy development, students were not guided step-by-step by Instructor 2; instead, they were asked to independently identify their current position in the process, determine the remaining steps, and outline ideas for moving forward. Unlike novice

researchers, late-stage student researchers are expected to assume more ownership of their research, monitor both process and progress, and plan productive steps to advance towards completion. These expectations require a greater degree of independence, self-determination, and self-reflection than is typically expected of novice student researchers.

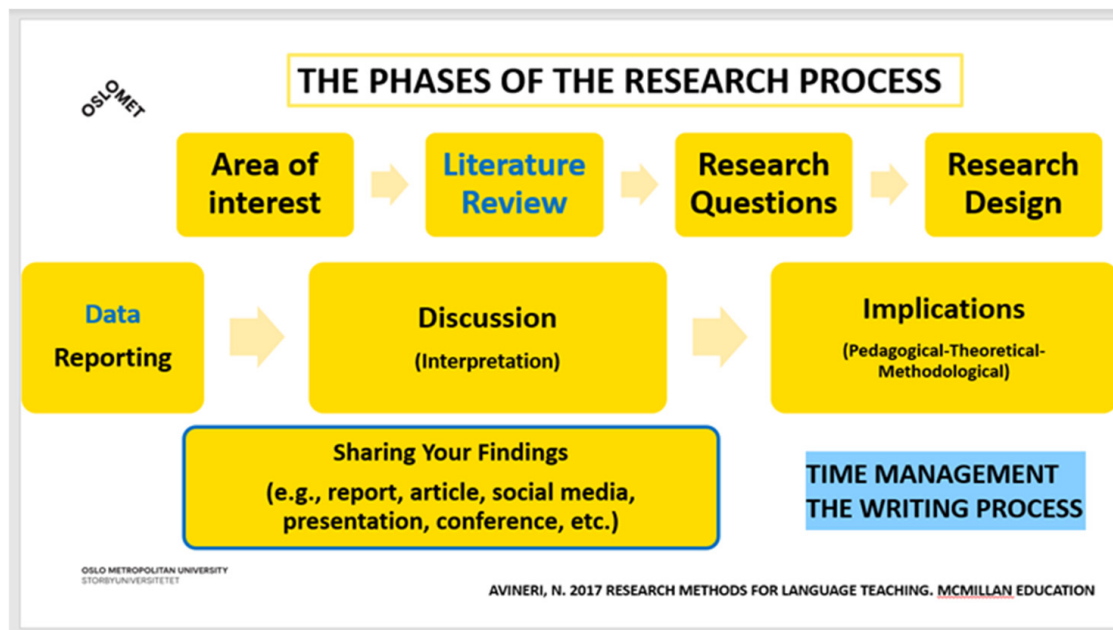


Figure 1. The phases of the research process.

Reflective Comments for Both Cases

These two cases reflect both novice and late-stage research literacy development among teacher education students, reflecting an upward spiral in research and R&D competence alongside evolving student identities and abilities. They also reflect certain challenges. The first concerns balancing the demands of student-centred teaching and the expectations of the research community. For novices, instruction often prioritises anonymity, trial-and-error, and identifying the limitations of research decisions. While similar emphases persist at later stages, advanced students are expected to account for their choices more rigorously. For example, Case 1 involves a practice that allows novice students to reformulate research questions after the fact, a strategy generally viewed negatively within the research community. Although this practice is allowed in the course, Instructor 1 emphasised the importance of clarifying that it may not be acceptable in the students' future research. Similarly, in Case 2, the use of a Wikipedia definition to frame student learning highlights pedagogical choices aimed at

scaffolding learners and socialising them into targeted research practices. Striking an appropriate balance between scaffolding and meeting the demands of the research community remains a key consideration in designing research literacy development in teacher education.

This challenge is also highlighted in research literacy development over time, which moves from greater teacher scaffolding and limited student independence to increased autonomy and reduced institutional support. In Case 1, novice learners engage in interactions that resemble those of the research community but are allowed to engage in this unfamiliar role anonymously, thereby easing their entry into unfamiliar roles. In contrast, Case 2 requires students to participate in an interactive task and assess their knowledge and understanding in a mini quiz, which reflects instructors' higher expectations for student accountability and engagement.

The amount and type of scaffolding provided for students' research processes varied between the two cases. In Case 1, scaffolding was operationalised through the course structure and models of research texts appropriate for this level. In contrast, Case 2 highlighted self-determination and accountability, particularly through the visualisation of the research process. While consideration has been given to extending examples of progression in Case 1 by incorporating master's theses samples, questions remain as to whether – and to what degree – such additions would benefit students, given the affective demands and time constraints at this stage of development.

A final observation concerns the relevance of research literacy within teacher education in Norway, where teachers' professional knowledge is expected to bridge theory, research, and everyday classroom practices, supporting teachers' continual professional development. However, merging teaching and research communities can be very challenging. The cases discussed primarily reflect socialisation into the researcher role, which some students and teaching professionals may view as less relevant to practical classroom contexts. This tension between the academic and professional domains can undermine efforts to integrate and align research and practice (Afdal & Spernes, 2018; Caspersen & Smeby, 2023; Hermansen, 2019). Conversely, the student-centred approaches illustrated in these cases may enhance pre-service teachers' perceptions of research relevance and encourage their own research initiatives as part of developing future teaching practices.

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Appendix

Case 1: Semester Outline

Week	Teaching hours	Topic and link to class materials
1-2	16	Research-led and –tutored classes on various topics in English subject didactics
Deadline	End of week 2	Fill in a survey on: Chosen research topics and/or RQ (Co)authors, if any Groups of 3-4 members for the reading group AND peer review course requirement Supervisors are assigned based on this information
3	2	Workshop: Writing a project proposal (introduction, research question and theoretical background)
3	2	Workshop: Writing a research proposal (research methodology and ethics)
3	2	Research-led and tutored class on a topic in English subject didactics
Deadline	End of week 3	Submit project proposal draft for peer review
4	4	Research-led and –tutored class on a topic in English subject didactics
4	2	Peer review of the project proposal (group discussion in class)
4	2	Research-led and –tutored class on a topic in English subject didactics
Deadline	End of week 4	Submit final version of project proposal for the advisor
5	4	Workshop: literature search and theoretical background
5	2	Workshop: Data collection for theoretical papers (literature review)
5	2	Not obligatory: literature search support
5	4	Workshop: Data collection for empirical papers

Deadline	End of week 5	Submit self-chosen peer-reviewed paper for reading group course requirement
6	Start of week	No teaching, time to read the submitted papers from classmates in one's group for the reading group course requirement
6	2 (end of week)	Reading group course requirement (group discussion in class)
6	2	Workshop: research through literary analysis
7		Cross-curricular week on Children, Youth and Health, no teaching in the module
8	4	Workshop: thematic analysis of qualitative data
8	2	Workshop: quantitative data analysis
8	2	Workshop: literature review data analysis
8	4	Workshop: Discussing findings and academic writing
9	4	Not obligatory - Q&A / Shut-up-and-write
10	4	Not obligatory - Q&A / Shut-up-and-write
10	2	Group advising session with advisor
11	2	Not obligatory - Q&A / Shut-up-and-write
Deadline	End of week 11	Submit draft of final paper
12-14		Practice placement, no teaching in the module
15	During the week	Individual meetings with advisors
15	4	Final class: Finalizing the paper, course evaluation, eating cake
16	End of week	Exam hand-in

Case 1: Selected Presentation Slides

Week	Project Proposal writing	
33-34	Reading different research papers and learning about possible topics, research methods etc.	✓
34	Setting up your peer and guidance network : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of groups for peer review and reading group course requirement. • Choice of topic and whether you are writing alone or with someone. • Advisors are assigned week 35-36 based on chosen topics and research proposals. 	✓
35	Defining the research question and initial planning of data collection Writing the project proposal draft (2 workshops in class) Project proposal draft for peer review hand-in	✗
36	Peer review in class on Wednesday, discussing and revising the project proposal Project proposal final version hand-in	

Paper outline

- Introduction/Background
 - Theory
 - Method
 - Results
 - Discussion
 - Conclusion
- References

5000/7000/9000 words

PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Background:

Description of the topic, your motivation for choosing it, and justification of its relevance for English teaching

Research question:

Statement of the research question (and any sub-questions)

Theoretical background:

Overview of some relevant literature on the topic (minimum 80 pages of references) and why it is relevant for your paper.

Research design/methodology:

Description of the research design (data collection method, timeline etc.) and justification for the choice of method in relation to the research question.

Reflection on peer review: A 200-word (In addition to the 1400-word proposal) reflection note on how you followed up on and benefited from the peer review of your project. You can also add questions to the advisor about things you want specific feedback on.

1400 +/-10% words

3

Start writing your project proposal!

Create a word document titled:

YourSurname_Project Proposal_290823

At the top of the page, write the title and your name under it:

Project Proposal
Dragana Surkalovic

Create subsections:

- 1.Introduction
- 2.Research question
- 3.Theoretical background
- 4.Research design/methodology
- 5.Reflection on peer review

Paper outline

- Introduction/Background

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References

5000/7000/9000 words

TODAY

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1400 +/-10% words

7

Paper outline

- Introduction/Background

- Theory
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- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

References

5000/7000/9000 words

**a bit today,
much more
in week 37**

(if theoretical paper)

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1400 +/-10% words

8

Paper outline

- Introduction/Background
 - Theory
 - Method
 - Results
 - Discussion
 - Conclusion
- References

Thursday
workshop

5000/7000/9000 words

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1400 +/-10% words

9

In the final
version to
advisor,
after you
have done
the peer
review

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1400 +/-10% words

10