

# Active learning: students learn through teaching

## WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

A description of how almost any class activity typically led by an instructor can be led by students as an active learning experience, sample activities, and how to structure such an activity.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

After reviewing the types of activities and deciding which class activity will become a student-led one, model the activity for students. Prepare students for their roles as leaders, and act as facilitator while assessing students. For assistance, please [contact CET](http://cet.usc.edu/).

Students learning through teaching, also called students-as-teachers, happens in any activity or assignment for which an instructor cedes authority for something they would usually do. Instead, the instructor structures the activity to be led by students with the instructor taking a guiding role. Students can be leading a peer, a group, or the whole class.

### Characteristics

When instructors allow students to learn through teaching, it has the following characteristics

* Appreciative inquiry
* Clear expectations and structure
* Student-led
* Content-based

### Facilitation Process

#### PRE

* Instructor models student task before students attempt to lead it themselves.
* Instructor introduces expectations and structure.
* Students prepare for their role as teachers.

#### DURING

* Students teach/lead in a position of authority.
* Instructor facilitates and assesses.

#### POST

* Instructor closes and offers comments.
* Instructor provides student leaders feedback and grade.

### Options

It is possible for a student-as-teacher activity to have any combination of the following forms and delivery depending on your need, preference, or purpose. More or less control is ceded to students depending on their level, from novice to advanced.

Table 1 Options

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Small class | Large class |
| Individual work | Groupwork |
| Graded | Not graded |
| In-class work | Homework |
| More student control | Less student control |
| Student content | Course content |
| Low-tech | High-tech |

### Benefits

Cognitive

* Mastery
* Skill development
* Retention

Personal

* Autonomy
* Confidence
* Ownership

Social

* Connectedness
* Purpose
* Teamwork

### Activity Types

With clear expectations and enough structure, almost any activity the instructor usually leads can be led by students. Below are a few example activities for which an instructor can cede authority and allow students to learn through teaching.

* Write a quiz or correct a peer’s
* Make a study guide for others
* Create a poster/infographic
* Record a video explainer
* Perform a demo
* Be the expert for an expert interview
* Lead a discussion
* Give presentations
* Provide peer review/feedback
* Do an article analysis
* Contribute course material additions
* Hold a simulated professional conference