

Examples of Active Student Participation at Uppsala University

WHAT Student-led seminars—Leadership Labs—in the course Climate Change Leadership

INSTITUTION / FACULTY Centre for Environment and Development Studies (CEMUS)

WHICH STUDENTS PARTICIPATE Undergraduate and Master’s students studying interdisciplinary courses at the Centre for Environment and Development Studies

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DESCRIPTION Students in small groups of 4-5 people choose a topic they are interested in and co-create and lead a “Leadership Lab” for their peers. Each group is responsible for 1 hour of class time during the semester. This involves planning and then facilitating the leadership lab. The form is totally free, and the students are encouraged to use alternative formats to lecture.

PURPOSE / BACKGROUND Due to a great diversity of knowledge and interests among students it is hard to accommodate everyone’s needs throughout the course. These occasions give students the opportunity to explore topics and concepts that are not part of the regular schedule, though still within the course framework and goals, and introduce them to their peers. Moreover, they get to practice facilitation and leadership skills, which are more difficult to fit into a more traditional lecture series, yet which the students are meant to practice as part of the learning outcomes for the course.

PROS

- Practice group work
- Practice facilitation and therefore get a better understanding of the challenges of teaching or communicating information to a large group
- Building relationships with peers
- Including students in the course creation process and therefore getting perspectives that would normally not have been included in the course content

CONS / CHALLENGES

- Problems working in groups (different expectations, some students do the brunt of the work)
- Communicating enough of a framework that the students feel they have something concrete that they are working towards