

Examples of Active Student Participation at Uppsala University

WHAT	Student-led seminars—Learning 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	Three days in the schedule of the course are devoted to this student-led activity. Students in small groups of 4-5 people co-create and lead a “Learning Lab” for their peers. Each group is given one course goal, of which there are eight in this course and which is the focus of the learning lab, and is responsible for 1 hour of class time during the semester. The group work involves planning and then facilitating the learning 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. This exercise draws attention to the course goals, and also gives students the opportunity to explore topics and concepts that are not necessarily part of the regular schedule. Moreover, the students 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course goals have a more explicit presence and students become more aware of the learning processes around each goal• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 (can be difficult for students who have only ever experienced lectures in their education to come up with different ways of working with new information)