

# **A Brief Introduction to Student Team Exercises (STEs) for Students**

**Office of Educational Development**

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## **What are Student Team Exercises (STEs)?**

Student Team Exercises are faculty-developed small group (2-15 members) activities in which students use course content to complete a graded team task such as a case or problem set. The primary purpose of an STE is to reinforce course content while encouraging students to hone their analytical and communication skills. Students receive three scores as part of their participation in the Student Team Exercise: a score on a short pre-exercise readiness exam on assigned readings, a score for the performance of their team as a whole on the group task, and a score from their fellow team members for their participation in accomplishing the team's task.

## **What's so good about Student Team Exercises?**

Student Team Exercises involve students in teaching one another course content and applying the content in solving realistic problems. They motivate students to read and organize assigned course materials in preparation for a public discussion based on their knowledge. They require students to apply communication and problem-solving skills among their peers.

Student Team Exercises prime students for subsequent course lectures and assignments. Students arrive better prepared, ask more profound questions, and "get it" more quickly. This allows instructors to lecture on more advanced concepts and make more subtle distinctions.

Student Team Exercises help prepare students for the problem-solving challenges they will face when working as part of a team in clinical settings.

## **How does an STE work?**

Your instructors will identify the learning outcomes related to the STE and give students the associated preparatory readings and materials. They will set a date for the STE and schedule a short (10- to 20-item) online, take-home readiness exam on the assigned readings. As students must complete the readiness exam prior to the class date on which they will participate in the STE, instructors usually schedule the readiness exam for the preceding evening.

On the day of the STE, the instructor will assign students to teams and present the case, clinical scenario, or problem(s) the team is to begin to solve in the time allotted. On occasion, the instructor may make faculty consultants available to teams or allow teams time to use the library or team-selected outside consultants.

Instructors will give one member of each team a form that the team will use to submit their findings, e.g., diagnoses, treatment plans, action plans, proposed hypotheses, etc. Instructors will use this form to determine each team's task score and will give each team member that same score. Instructors will also give each team member a peer evaluation form that she or he will use in evaluating other members of the team. Lastly, instructors will ask each team to elect a spokesperson, who will represent the team in the post-STE class discussion.

After the STE, the instructor will ask each team's spokesperson to bring the team's report form to the front of the class to offer the team's findings. Instructors will use the discussion of the teams' reports to fill in students' knowledge gaps and to model expert clinical and scientific reasoning. Spokespersons for each team must turn in their team's report to the instructor before returning to their seats. All team members must turn in their peer ratings forms prior to leaving class.

Students' STE score (0-100) will be calculated as the sum of their weighted readiness exam, team report, and peer assessment scores. For example, if an instructor weights the readiness exam, team report, and peer assessment as 30%, 50%, and 20%, respectively, and a student scores 90, 70, and 90, respectively, on these exams, the student's STE score will be  $(.3 \times 90) + (.5 \times 70) + (.2 \times 90) = 80$ .

### **What are the educational foundations of Student Team Exercises?**

Student Team Exercises are based on the literature and practice of Team Based Learning. For a deeper understanding of Team Based Learning, please visit these websites: [www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/](http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/), [www.bcm.tmc.edu/fac-ed/team\\_learning/index.html](http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/fac-ed/team_learning/index.html), [www.med.wright.edu/aa/facdev/TBL/](http://www.med.wright.edu/aa/facdev/TBL/), [www.tlcollaborative.org](http://www.tlcollaborative.org)