

# Explaining Concepts

One of the best ways to improve your understanding of a topic is to say it out loud and teach it to someone else. In this module, you will practice both your verbal and your listening skills so that you can improve your one-on-one interaction with students at your study groups.

- 1) Work with a partner. Each of you selects a different lecture from this week and studies one topic, diagram, or concept from that lecture. Or, if you have homework problems, you can each select one that involves elaboration or explanation. You may use whatever resources you have available (5 minutes).
- 2) Take turns explaining your concepts or homework problems to each other by doing the following (10 minutes):
  - a. Tell your partner what you are going to explain to them. “This is how I think \_\_\_\_\_ works” or something that indicates that you are taking ownership of your explanation. This lets the listener know that they can disagree with or refine your explanation
  - b. Ask your partner if they have any questions about the concept. “Does this make sense to you?” or “What questions do you have about this?”
  - c. Ask your partner to reflect back what you just explained. “So that I know you understand how \_\_\_\_\_ works, could you please explain the same concept/problem in your own words?”
- 3) Evaluate yourself and share with your partner: (5 minutes)

What was more difficult: explaining your concept or reflecting your partner’s concept? Why?

List two things that you can do to improve your ability to explain concepts.

- 4) Homework assignment: At your next study group, use the script above when explaining concepts to students. As a preceptor, you can help improve others’ ability to explain concepts by having the student you helped later explain the same concept to someone else. For example, if you cover a homework question early in the study group and someone who shows up later asks about the same question. “Brittany, can you show Renee how to do question 5?”