Sometime You Have to Be the "Guide on the Side"

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For my best class, I did nothing. I didn't teach, design the lecture, or engage the students. All I did was attend the class and listen to what was going on. I let the students teach themselves how to learn. They did it all. The students organized the discussion, divided the work among them, and conducted the class.

The class had no single instructor. Instead, it was a collaborative learning environment where students take responsibility for their learning. Each student is a resource for the others, and the teacher acts more as a facilitator than a lecturer.

The class was an experiment in collaborative learning, with the goal of creating a learning environment that promotes active, engaged, and meaningful participation by all students. The teacher's role was to facilitate the process, encouraging students to think critically, ask questions, and engage in meaningful discussions.

The results were impressive. The students were highly engaged, and their understanding of the material was significantly deeper than in traditional lecture-based classes. The class was successful because it allowed the students to take ownership of their learning, which led to greater motivation and a deeper understanding of the material.

But what about the students who don't have the motivation or ability to teach themselves? The answer is that they need to be taught how to learn. In those instances, the teacher must take on a more traditional role and provide direct instruction and guidance.

Overall, the "Guide on the Side" approach can be a powerful tool for educators looking to create more engaging and effective learning environments. It requires a willingness to let go of traditional teaching methods and embrace the idea that students can teach themselves if given the opportunity. The results can be significant, with students taking ownership of their learning and achieving a deeper understanding of the material.