




The PBL Method as an Enabling Tool for Virtual Teaching & Learning

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This presentation *aims* to explore the issue of how the *problem-based learning (PBL)* method can facilitate students to conduct their *case analyses* in oKM studies – case illustration: our WebCT-based course of *Organizational Learning & Competence Management*



Problem-based Learning Method

- PBL method for teaching and learning has been widely used in the *medical sciences* ever since the 1960's. Since then it has been used in many other disciplines, as well, for example, in the natural & social sciences, and law and **business studies** (e.g., BBA program in Helia).
- Nowadays PBL is a well studied area, and in Finland there is a very active research group called **ProBell** (Research Group for Problem-based Learning in Finnish Higher Education)
- Problem-based learning (PBL) is an instructional method that challenges students to "**learn to how to learn**," working **cooperatively** in groups to seek solutions to **real-world problems**. These problems are used to engage students' *curiosity* and initiate learning the subject matter. PBL prepares students to *think critically and analytically*, and to *find and use* appropriate learning resources.
- PBL is a **group learning strategy** where students in small groups work towards problem resolution by asking and answering their own and peers' questions, using their collective skill at acquiring, analyzing, and communicating information and experience.



Our Key PBL Attentative Focuses

- **Motivation Issue:** PBL pays special attention to students' particular study needs, interests and self initiatives
- **Knowledge Sharing:** encourages students to work as a group and to share their knowledge and learning experiences
- **Theory-Practice:** directs students to combine theory with practice by emphasizing real-life situation case analyses

7 Steps of Case Analysis based on Problem-based Learning

Stage 1: Ethnography of problems

1. **Reading the case** (charting situation & clarifying the group's mission)
2. **Analysing the case** (making a detailed list of what the group has known about the problem situation)
3. **Developing a problem statement** (in one or two sentences)

Stage 2: Analysing and searching for a new solution

4. **Formulating a set of relevant questions**
5. **List possible solutions and actions**

Stage 3: Creating a new model

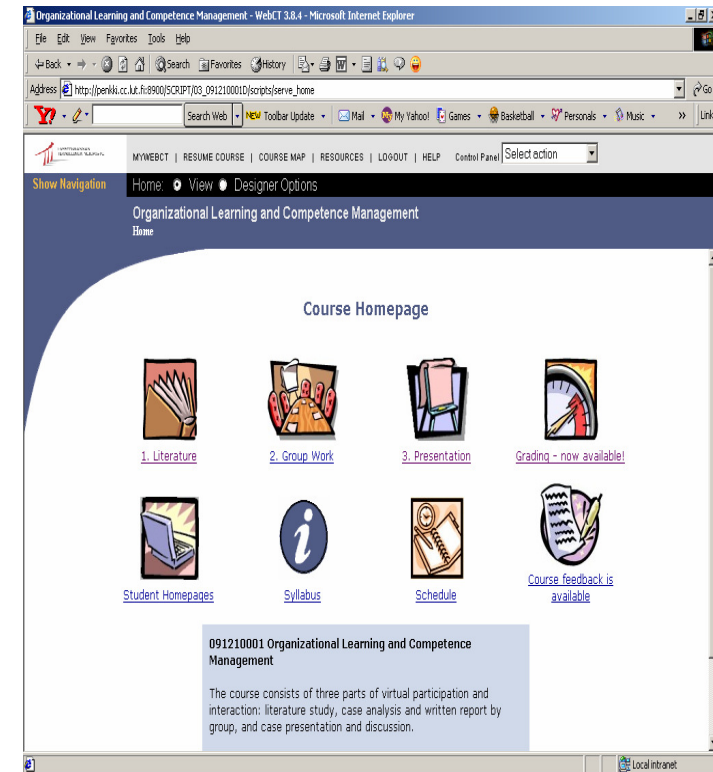
6. **Creating new way of work and new tools** (How should it be to work in the future?)
7. **Presenting findings for discussion and evaluation**

Frameworks and tools are useful only when they are put into your own use. Make your own version of the method that may guide your analytic work.

Organizational Learning & Competence Management: Course Design & Group Work

Info-meeting (*f-to-f*) & Course Registration via WebCT / Blackboard

- Literature Study (3 weeks)
- Group Work (3 weeks)
 - guide for group work + first group meeting (*f-to-f*)
 - case analysis by group
 - submitting a written report
 - presentation and discussion (2 days)
- student feedback and grading



Blackboard / WebCT CE 6



Motivation Issue

- info-meeting of the course & student homepage (e.g., Roster & Who's online & chat functions in Blackboard / WebCT CE 6)
- real-life situation cases (ready or self-compiled) as a trigger of the group work
- self-test & virtual CM-library
- individual projects possible for special student situations (tailored)



Knowledge Sharing

- **Individual** literature study & discussion forums at **group** level and for the whole **class**
- the mixture of student group members with **diverse study experience** (international exchange, basic & adult students)
- the first **face-to-face group meeting** (between literature study & group work)
- student discussion and **presentation** of the group work and tutors' opinions and feedbacks
- **evaluation** of study performance based on the learning processes rather than outcomes alone: active reading & participation, interaction & collaboration within and between groups



Theory-Practice Linkage

- **literature study** (theory) + real-life situation
case analysis (practice)
- 7-step PBL method as an analytic tool for the case analysis & student discussion on the appropriateness & **revision** of the tool & alternative(s)
- the mixture of students in a group with and without work / business / management **experience**
- fieldwork including in-depth interviews, communication with and participations in **case companies**



Student Feedback

- According to the feedback we got, almost all the groups experienced that the 7-step model **supported** and guided group work well or very well. The model was seen especially supportive for good progress in the **group work process**.
- Quite a few students see it irrelevant.

Concluding Remarks

clear information and **rule-based** governance is necessary (e.g., Info-meeting, strict time schedule, section for guiding group work)

- **structural** and analytic **tools** like 7-step PBL method play a significant role in student case analysis in a virtual learning environment
- virtual learning needs both **mechanic** (compulsory tasks) and **dynamic** parts (alternative and free spaces for having student initiatives) of studies
- **time management** is critical to keep the interest and rhythm of the course, as well as allowing appropriate time for getting feeling to work and thought formations
- promoting active **discussions** in a **virtual** platform is a big challenge – it demands proper and timely interactions between tutors and students and among all members of the study community



Thank You!

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