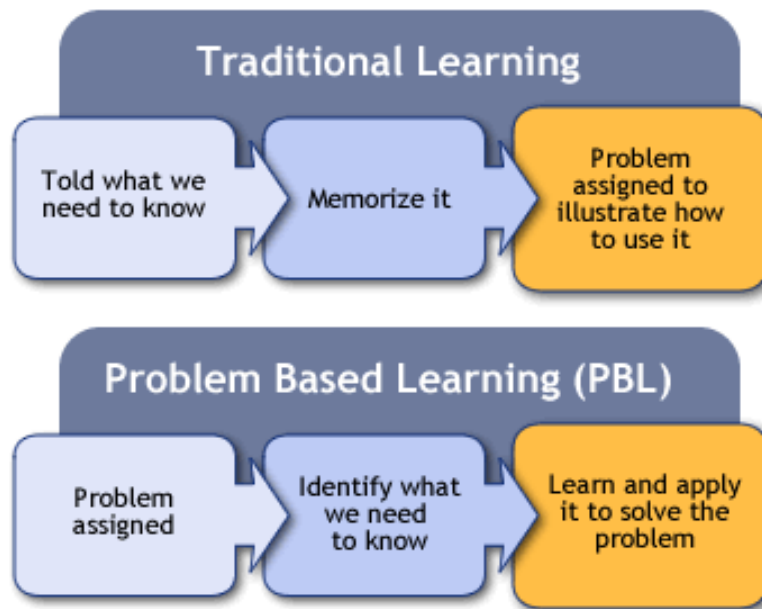


Problem-Based Learning (PBL)



Overview

In problem-based learning (PBL) students use “triggers” from the problem case or scenario to define their own learning objectives. Subsequently they do independent, self-directed study before returning to the group to discuss and refine their acquired knowledge. Thus, PBL is not about problem solving per se, but rather it uses appropriate problems to increase knowledge and understanding. However, there is no reason why the PBL process couldn’t be used to teach problem solving. The process is clearly defined, and the several variations that exist all follow a similar series of steps.

PBL Tutorial Process

Step 1 – Identify and clarify unfamiliar terms presented in the scenario; the scribe lists those that remain unexplained after discussion

Step 2 – Define the problem or problems to be discussed; students may have different views on the issues, but all should be considered; scribe records a list of agreed upon problems

Step 3 – “Brainstorming” session to discuss the problem(s), suggesting possible explanations on the basis of prior knowledge; students draw on each other’s knowledge and identify areas of incomplete knowledge; scribe records all discussion

Step 4 – Review steps 2 and 2 and arrange explanations into tentative solutions; scribe organizes the explanations and restructures if necessary

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Step 5 – Formulate learning objectives; group reaches consensus on the learning objectives; tutor ensures learning objectives are focused, achievable, comprehensive, and appropriate

Step 6 – Private study (all students gather information related to each learning objectives)

Step 7 – Group shares results of private study (students identify their learning resources and share their results); tutor checks learning and might assess the group