PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTIONS

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which students work in groups in order to solve a complex problem. The solution found is less important that the learning process so it is better not to produce a deliverable.

In PBL, there are three phases. First phase: the students analyse the problem and a tutor guides them only if they ask for it. Second phase: individually, the students study the information needed to carry out the action plan. Third phase: in groups again, they share their new knowledge, draw up a synthesis and try to solve the problem.

Step 1: in Groups
Analysing the problem
Building the action plan

Step 2: Individually
Carrying out the action plan

Step 3: in Groups
Validating learning outcomes
Identifying shortcomings

BENEFITS

1. **Engagement and autonomy**
   Students are motivated to find answers to their study goals
2. **Lifelong learning**
   This method is suited to long-term knowledge retention and foster lifelong learning
3. **Problem-solving skills**
   Students will develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, needed in the workplace
4. **Peer exchange**
   They will learn from their peers

CHALLENGES

1. **Tutoring, not teaching**
   Teachers are the facilitators of learning, not the fount of knowledge
2. **Less learning outcomes**
   The amount of content delivered through this method may be sparser than in traditional lectures
3. **Time needed**
   Scripting and planning is hard work at the beginning
4. **Defining learning outcomes**
   On the 1st phase, it can be difficult for students to define what they need to learn

REFERENCES

Barrows H.S., Tamblyn, R. (1980). *Problem-Based Learning: An Approach to Medical Education*. Springer Publishing Co

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