Problem-Based Learning: application of theory to practice in Mental Health Nurse Education

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Three perspectives...

Problem-Based Learning as...

- A process of enquiry
- Learning to learn
- A cognitive constructionist approach, in which students construct mental models of the world (Schmidt, Rotgand and Yew 2011)
What is Problem-Based Learning?

PBL is a student-centred approach to learning involving a ‘group-based complex problem-solving tutorial’ (Prosser and Sze 2014)

Students

- are exposed to ‘trigger learning materials’ based on relevant problems
- work in small groups to identify and explore the issues, building on previous knowledge
- note gaps in their individual knowledge and skills
- share the learning work/research required to address the problems
- use the learning together to devise solutions
- feed back to the group and apply the knowledge

Tutors act as facilitators
What makes PBL effective?

• Enthusiastic subject specialists (Cooper and Carver 2012)
• ‘flexible scaffolding’ from ‘socially congruent’ facilitators (Schmidt, Rotgand and Yew 2011)
• Not just collaborative working – individual knowledge acquisition needed too
• ‘activation-elaboration’ students are driven to address gaps in their knowledge
• ‘situational interest’ students are motivated to solve an intriguing puzzle
• Small group discussions facilitate understanding and sustain it long-term (Schmidt et al 2011)
• Having a good problem
• Friendships and peer-pressure
PBL Benefits: Academic Skills

• Bridges the theory-practice gap (D’Sa and Bhaduri 2013)

• Improves long term retention of content and short-term retention involving elaboration of new information (Prosser and Sze 2014)

• Improves clinical skills and reasoning (Prosser and Sze 2014)

• Helps students to work autonomously, feel competent and related to others, be intrinsically motivated and self-regulating (Dolmans and Gijbels 2013, D’Sa and Bhaduri 2013)

• Leads to ‘deeper learning’ (Dolmans and Gijbels 2013)

• Students develop life-long learning skills (Prosser and Sze 2014)
PBL scenarios link to four domains in the NMC

• 1. Professional values
• 2. Communication and interpersonal skills
• 3. Nursing practice and decision making
• 4. Leadership, management and team working
PBL Benefits: Emotional Intelligence

• Helps students to work autonomously, feel competent and related to others, be intrinsically motivated and self-regulating (Dolmans and Gijbels 2013, D’Sa and Bhaduri 2013)
• Develops team working, professional respect, communication and interpersonal skills (Cooper and Carver 2012, MacVane Phipps et al 2015)
• Engages emotions, facilitates holistic understanding and compassionate values (MacVane Phipps et al 2015)
• Develops ‘situational awareness’ and assertiveness – essential for safe care (MacVane Phipps et al 2015)
• Positive experiences for students (Cooper and Carver 2012, D’Sa and Bhaduri 2013)
• Leads to ‘deeper learning’ (Dolmans and Gijbels 2013)
Combining Simulation, ‘Serious Games’ and PBL in the classroom

Our examples:

• Responding to ‘indications of distress’ in people living with dementia (serious game + PBL)

• Applying the Mental Capacity Act (2005) when working with people with MH problems who need to make decisions (serious game + PBL + simulation)

• Complex care decision-making and dilemmas
• Employability

(Simulation and PBL combined evaluated positively by students Roh Kim & Kim 2013)
Working together:
Do you have topics which would benefit from a PBL approach?

1. Identify a learning need and desired outcome
2. Generate student motivation – consequence of gap in knowledge + an interesting problem
3. Design a ‘trigger’
4. Provide a ‘soft scaffold’
5. Anticipate facilitation approach
References


