



Published online: 3-16-2011

Editor's Introduction

Michael M. Grant

University of Memphis, michael.m.grant@gmail.com

IJPBL is Published in Open Access Format through the Generous Support of the [Teaching Academy at Purdue University](#), the [School of Education at Indiana University](#), and the [Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education at the University of Oklahoma](#).

Recommended Citation

Grant, M. M. (2011). Editor's Introduction. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 5(1).

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7771/1541-5015.1205>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

Editor's Introduction

Michael M. Grant

PBL—both problem-based learning and project-based learning—is implemented and researched in a variety of fields and with a variety of methodologies. The nature of PBLs encourages integrations with diverse domains (Savery, 2006) and research strategies (cf. Du, Graaff, & Kolmos, 2009). In this first issue of volume 5, we have three studies that exemplify both of these characteristics.

In Sockalingam and Schmidt's "Characteristics of Problems for Problem-Based Learning: The Students' Perspective," second-year students in a microbiology curriculum reflect on their learning processes within problem-based learning. Using a textual content analysis and drawing from qualitative and quantitative findings, the authors derive eleven characteristics of problems for PBL. The most important characteristic to students is the extent to which the problem leads to the intended learning issue. Along with the ten other characteristics, the authors compare previously published lists of characteristics in table 3. This table certainly is significant and well worth reviewing.

Hakkarainen continues an in-depth qualitative exploration of digital video students in "Promoting Meaningful Learning through Video Production-Supported PBL." Through surveys and interviews, Hakkarainen considers both individual and team-based experiences in this "highly collaborative, cooperational, and conversational" course. Notable in this report of research is the evidence of positive and negative group dynamics. This study brings to light the successes and challenges of having an individual's perspective and learning preferences represented within a group.

Finally, O'Donoghue, McMahon, Doody, Smith, and Cusack conduct a structured review of problem-based learning research as an instructional strategy in therapy education with "Problem-Based Learning in Professional Entry-Level Therapy Education: A Review of Controlled Evaluation Studies." This article traces a structured methodology, using a systemic and systematic review and comparison of PBL research. O'Donoghue et al. provide a detailed account of how they winnowed 3,885 possible studies to six. These six are then compared based on specific criteria and quality of data. The specifics offered in this article for review are not detailed in many texts.

In these three articles, the contexts include science, media education, and therapy education—certainly a broad continuum of applications. Moreover, quantitative, qualitative, and meta-analytic methodologies are applied. All three articles, however, consider how student participants approach PBL. The first two articles (Sockalingam & Schmidt; Hakkarainen) use methods to directly capture data from the students. The third article (O'Donoghue et al.) consider the students' approaches as one of their primary research questions within the meta-analytic approach. Unfortunately, only one of the six studies offer high quality evidence for this question. Overall, the diversity of contexts and methods offer promise for continuing to depict students' learning experiences with others and inside PBL curricula.

References

- Du, X., Graaff, E. D., & Kolmos, A. (2009). *Research on PBL practice in engineering education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Savery, John R. (2006). Overview of problem-based learning: Definitions and distinctions. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 1(1). Retrieved January 23, 2011, from <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/ijpbl/vol1/iss1/3>