Problem-Based Learning
by floating facilitation

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Dela where?
First, a quick exercise:

1. Individually, write down five words or short phrases that come to mind when you think of:
   **Student-Centered Learning**

2. In pairs or small groups, select three “most important”.

3. Finally, report out just one.
the individuals learning the most in the typical classrooms are the teachers there. They have reserved for themselves the very conditions that promote learning:

actively seeking new information, integrating it with what is known, organizing it in a meaningful way, and explaining it to others.

Page 35, Huba and Freed, *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning*, 2000
“The principal idea behind PBL is that the starting point for learning should be a problem, a query, or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve.”

What are the Common Features of PBL?

Learning is initiated by a problem.
Problems are based on complex, real-world situations.
All information needed to solve problem is not given initially.
Students identify, find, and use appropriate resources.
Students work in permanent groups.
Learning is active, integrated, cumulative, and connected.
A Typical Day in a PBL Course
PBL: The Process

Resolution of Problem;
(How did we do?)
- Integrate new Information;
- Refine questions
- Reconvene, report on research;
- Research questions; summarize; analyze findings

Next stage of the problem

Presentation of Problem
- Organize ideas and prior knowledge
  (What do we know?)
- Pose questions (What do we need to know?)
- Assign responsibility for questions; discuss resources
Common Classroom Models

Medical school
Floating Facilitator
Peer Facilitator
“Hybrid”
Factors in Choosing a Model

Class size
Intellectual maturity of students
Student motivation
Course learning objectives
Instructor’s preferences
Availability of peer facilitators
Medical School Model

Dedicated faculty tutor
Groups of 8-10
Very student-centered environment
Group discussion is primary class activity

A good choice for
Highly motivated, experienced learners.
Small, upper-level seminar classes.
Floating Facilitator Model

More structured format: greater degree of instructor input into learning issues and resources.

Group size: 4-6

A good choice for
Less experienced learners.
Classes of all sizes.

Facilitator rotates through groups: Asks questions, directs discussions, checks understanding.

Other class activities:
– Groups report out
– Whole class discussions
– (Mini-)lectures
Peer Facilitator Model

Advanced undergraduates (or graduate assistants) serve as facilitators
- Have previously completed course in PBL format.
- Help monitor group progress and dynamics.
- Serve as role models for novice learners.
- Capstone (or final) experience for peer facilitators.

Instructor/professor also facilitates groups.

Floating vs. dedicated. A good choice for classes of all sizes.
Activities of the Peer Group Facilitators

- Weekly meetings with the course instructor
- Tutorial Methods of Instruction
  - Training course for peer facilitators
- Work with one or more PBL groups in class
- Optional: meet with group(s) outside of class
- No involvement in grading
Peer Facilitator Model

Facilitator training important
  Development of questioning skills
  Group dynamics
  Resource guide
“The principal idea behind PBL is that the starting point for learning should be a problem, a query, or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve.”

*Boud (1985)*