



## Characteristics Needed in College Graduates

- High level of communication skills
- Ability to define problems, gather and evaluate information, develop solutions
- Team skills -- ability to work with others
- Ability to use all of the above to address problems in a complex real-world setting

Quality Assurance in Undergraduate Education (1994)  
Wingspread Conference, ECS, Boulder, CO.



## What Is PBL?

“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, D. (1985) PBL in perspective. In “PBL in Education for the Professions,” D. J. Boud (ed); p. 13.*



## What Is PBL?

“...careful inspection of methods which are permanently successful in formal education...will reveal that they depend for their efficiency upon the fact that they go back to the type of situation which causes reflection out of school in ordinary life. They give pupils *something to do, not something to learn; and if the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking, or the intentional noting of connections; learning naturally results.*”

John Dewey (1916)



## PBL is...

“...a process of acquiring understanding, knowledge, skills and attitudes in the context of an unfamiliar situation, and applying such learning to that situation.”

- C. E. Engel, University of Newcastle



## 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.



## PBL: The Process

