

COPING WITH STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES IN PBL

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1ST YEAR “STANDARD” CHALLENGE

- Pupils from upper secondary schools have to be transformed to students at the university
- Simultaneously, most of them leave home and are supposed almost overnight to be transformed from older kids to young grown ups
- How can we scaffold this transformation and subsequently transfer of responsibility?

ADDITIONAL AAU/PBL CHALLENGE

- Originally the aim was to include students “*raised in a family without piano*”, i.e. limited academic training and learning capacity due to social environment
 - Challenge: lack of certain (learning) competencies due to social class
- In the last decade(s) this challenge has aggravated due to an increasing intake of students with “*non-western ethnic background*”, i.e. both limited academic training and learning capacity plus a lack of certain social/cultural competencies
 - Challenge: lack of competencies due to social class and other social competencies due to ethnic norms
 - Symptoms
 - Boys: very immature
 - Girls: very insecure

THE ORIGINAL PBL ANSWER

- Intertwine
 - cognition,
 - organisation and
 - motivation

I.E. THE STUDY SHOULD BE

- **PROBLEMORIENTED**

- Motivation by means of engagement and relevance
- Exemplary learning (problems as immediate symptoms calling for complex explanations)

- **PROJECT-ORGANISED**

- Collective action, social recognition, joint responsibility (students AND supervisor)

- **INTERDISCIPLINARY**

- Problem-managed cognition take priority over disciplinary

MAJOR IMPLICATION

- Project work and subsequently the project supervisor should play a key-role
- Students tended to be apprentices

CURRENT CHALLENGES TO THE MODEL

- Context have changed – e.g.
 - **Supervising**
 - Decreasing resources
 - **Students**
 - *Space of place* to *space of flow* – new types of communities
 - Motivation more by prospect than social engagement
 - Collective action more difficult due to some lack of social competencies

PREVIOUS REACTIONS

- Headlines like "*policing and harsher sentencing*"
 - Examinations, tests
- Increasing weight on lectures (disciplinary) and exercises/seminars
- That does not do the trick, i.e. sufficiently address individual challenges

THE REAL CHALLENGE TO DO THE TRICK

- I claim the answer to be reinforcement of the organisational part of PBL:
 - Supervisors must adequately connect to both space of flows and space of place where our students are
 - Supervisors must recognise individual challenges and hence empower the members of the project group to evolve skills enabling collective action and thus mutual evolution of social-academic learning
- Prerequisites (necessary but not sufficient):
 - All students in project groups
 - Make sure first year supervisors are conscious of the task
 - Develop supervisors' competencies concerning the task