

The Use of PBL at Master's Programs

Seminar

PBL Academy

Friday, 22nd of November 2019

Program

- 13.00 - 13.10 – Welcome /PBL Academy
- 13.10 - 13.25 – Some important points of difference between different Master's Programs *Patrik Kjærdsdam Telléus & Erik Laursen*
- 13.30 - 13.45 – Why do students attend Master's Programmes?
Nikolaj Stegeager
- 13.50 - 14.05 – The transition from passive to active learners – pedagogical implications
Anja Overgaard Thomassen
- 14.05 - 14.25 – Academic competencies – a prerequisite or an objective?
Diana Stentoft
- 14.25 - 14.40 – Refreshments
- 14.40 - 15.15 – Discussion in smaller groups
- 15.15 - 15.30 – Summing up

Introduction

Erik Laursen

PBL & Master Programs - WHY ?

- All Programs on Aalborg University have an obligation to use PBL (the Aalborg Model). This also includes the Master Programs, although there seems to be important differences between this category of programs and the Bachelor- and Kandidat Programs
- We have not really made an effort, to research the consequences of these differences when it comes to information on the different conditions for using the PBL model with a good result ..
- Especially the issue of *Transfer* seems to be an important one. The work related experiences of the typical student on a master program is a *possible gift* to the teaching and learning process. At the same time the worksituation of the master student might possibly be used as a training ground for acquired qualifications.

Differences between the Master Programs and the Bachelor/Kandidat Programs

- **Educational Background** : Profession- or Academic bachelor **vs.** College Education ('gymnasium')
- **Relation to Working Life** : In work as a professional **vs.** Outsider or marginal positions
- **Workbased experiences & knowledge** : Many **vs.** Few experiences
- **Motivation for studying** : To get access to the labor market /Becoming qualified to enter a profession **vs.** Specific Career Goals or Broad Personal development
- **Knowledge about the relevant Fields of Practice** : Normally the Teacher has greater knowledge than the Students. knows more than the student **vs.** often the Students know more than the Teacher.
- **Positions in working life** : Different positions are highly relevant (Hierarchy) **vs.** Different positions are irrelevant.
- **Private Situation** : midlife, often with family , work obligations, career **vs.** Younger, often without family, jobs of lesser importance, ambitions but yet no career.
- **Perspectives on 'problems'** : practical and concrete **vs.** Abstract and interest-based

3 Possible outcomes of using PBL

(Anja O. Thomassen)

1. Making it possible to **Focus on 'Real Problems'** in Academic Studies ("the anti- Ivory Tower Strategy")
2. **"The Pragmatical PBL"** Setting af Frame around the acquisition of competencies on cooperation, working in groups, working i Projects and developing relations between organisations and institutions.
3. **"The Analytical PBL"** Setting af frame around the acquisition of competencies to perceive and analyse practical problems from different theoretical perspectives , and translating theory-based insights into new practical solutions.



Some important points of difference between different Master's Programs

Patrik Kjærdsdam Tellés & Erik Laursen

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Differences Between Master programs relating to the **Target Groups**

- **Motivation** : Broad personal development vs. Specific Career Goals
- **Expected Outcome** : specific qualifications and skills vs a Degree vs. Personal Development
- The Program recruits from the same **Field of Work** vs recruits from different fields of work
- Majority of Students from the same **profession** vs several, different professions
- **Hierarchically vs Symmetrical** (different but equal) Relations between Students
- The majority of students possesses **Academic writing skills** vs substantial differences in academic writing skills
- The **progression in qualifications** wanted is accomplished by :
 - Adding new subjects, or
 - Increase the complexity in already known areas

Differences relating to the way to organize disciplinary content..

- Master programs as a specialization or a branch within a discipline [Sexology]
 - **Progression** (*disciplinary approach*)
 - *Know that* oriented
 - **Research motivated**
- Master programs as a broad or alternative perspective on or within a discipline [Medical humanities]
 - **Module texture:**
 - *Multi disciplinary approach*
 - *Interdisciplinary approach*
 - *Know of* oriented
 - **Problem motivated**
- Master programs as "new" disciplines [Clinical ethics]
 - **Progression** (*disciplinary approach*)
 - *Know how* oriented
 - **Student motivated**

A model reflecting the differences between Master programs

- Key concepts : **Classification & Frame** (Basil Bernstein) :
- **Classification** : Relates to the *relations* between *categories*, like subjects, educations, professions etc
 - **Strong Classifications** : different contents are separated & made significant
 - **Weak classifications** : different contents are blended and treated as alike
- **Frames** : Relates to *control over processes*
 - **Strong frames** : programs have strong and asymmetrical control
 - **Weak frames** : students have control in important areas, I
(like deciding on which problem to work with)

Educational Frame & Classification of Educational Background

		Educational Background of the Students			
		Same area of work		Different area of work	
		Strong Classifications.	Weak C	Strong C	Weak C
Organising the Program	Strong Frames	Vulnerable children(MBU) (based on work position) Sexology master Pain Science Master (Based on Education + strong selection criteria))			
	Weak Frames				Organisational Coaching (MOC) (based on weak selection criteria)

Educational Frame & Classification of the Subjects

		The Classification of the Subjects	
		Strong Classification	Weak Classification
Organising The programs	Strong Frames	Vulnerable Children(MBU) (based on the position of Law & Organization Theory) Sexology master ((based on Multi Disciplinarity) Pain Science Master (based on a hierarchical ordering of subjects)	
	Weak Frames		Organisational Coaching (MOC) (based on interdisciplinarity) e.g. coaching is a 'weak

Something to reflect on...

- The order of content is related to a form of identification and meta-reflexive position
 - Progression as a learning taxonomy vs. progression as a disciplinary hierarchy
 - A disciplinary progression vs. an individual path work
 - Multi disciplinary progression?
- AAU master program (by the virtue of PBL) often try to combine the disciplinary approach (being a branch of something) and a more complex or 'wicked' approach (being an alternative to something) which causes a perplexity (sometimes paradoxical) in terms of expectations, demands, outcomes etc.?
- Some master programs are also characterized by, to some extent, being "new disciplines" from one perspective and by being "a branch" or "an alternative" from others, affecting motivation, orientation and identity.
 - Differences between staff and students
 - Differences amongst students
 - Differences amongst staff