“Exciting Research” – An Oxymoron?

Using Problem-Based Learning to Enhance Library Instruction

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Who is Damien Hirst?
What is Problem-Based Learning?

• PBL is an inquiry based instructional approach
• Students work co-operatively, in groups, to seek solutions to real world problems
• Develops problem solving strategies, interdisciplinary knowledge
How does PBL work?

- Students, as active learners, are the problem-solvers with an ill-structured problem which mirrors a real-world problem
- PBL is “messy”
- PBL requires asking questions, gathering information and thoughtful reflection
- There is often no “right” answer
Key Concepts

• Begin with a problem
• Ensure the problem connects with the students’ world
• Give students the major responsibility for shaping and directing their own learning
• Use teams as the context for learning
• Require students to demonstrate what they learned through a product for presentation
The Problem:
Basic Characteristics

- Ill-structured
- Does not provide adequate information
- Provides opportunities for students to assume the role of “scientist” or “historian”
Students have a stake in the outcome—which increases motivation.
The Process

Asking questions:
- What do we know?
- What do we need to know?
- How can we find it out?

Students work in groups to share ideas, information, and expertise.
Groups provide opportunities for students to draw on prior knowledge.
The Instructor’s Role
Not a sage on the stage
Not point and click
Not chalk and talk!
The Instructor’s Role

A coach and mentor

A group facilitator

A source of information

Part of the solution
Discussion

Based on what you know about PBL:

How would it impact traditional library instruction?

What are some of the difficulties you might experience?

What types of skills would you need to have?
The Outcomes

• Increases critical thinking skills
• Students assume responsibility for their own learning
• Increases motivation and curiosity
• Promotes collaborative work
The Outcomes

PBL and Library Research Skills

Research indicates that students taught using the PBL method have significantly higher library research skills and understanding.
What’s your preference?

• What is contemporary art? Select several examples and explain why they fit into this genre.
Sample problem:

• Should Colorado lower the drinking age to 18? Present your case for or against.
Which sounds more interesting?

• Choose one of the following wars: the Korean War, the Vietnam War, or Desert Storm. Discuss the causes of that war.

• Why do some societies go to war, and others stay at home and never do? (from Ken Bain’s “What Makes Great Teachers Great?”)
CONFESSIONS OF A COLLEGE PLAGIARIST
CITE WHAT YOU WRITE

"I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO IT!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO IT!"
— THE REBEL STUDENT —

FEATURING LEARNING OUTCOMES:
STUDENTS WILL • DEFINE PLAGIARISM & RECOGNIZE OBVIOUS OCCURRENCES OF PLAGIARISM • RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PARAPHRASE & A QUOTATION • CREATE AND CREDIT A PARAPHRASE • LOCATE ONLINE EXAMPLES OF CITATION FORMATS

DIRECTED BY: PAM BACH & BARB MACKE
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
A Fatal Attraction
Steps to Basic Research

"Will she ever find a topic she can love to research?"

Featuring Learning Outcomes:

Students will:
1. Limit & Evaluate One Topic
2. Use the UC Libraries Catalog and Academic Search Premier to locate one book and one article about their topic
3. Apply basic evaluation criteria to the book & article retrieved

Directed by: Pam Bach & Barb Macke
University Libraries, University of Cincinnati
The Lexis Code

The Database Detective—What's my Keyword?

"Who wrote it?
How do I find it?
but just what am I
looking for in the
first place?"

Featuring Learning Outcomes:
Students will mine the search features of a database sharpen
their search skills for better results

Directed by: Pam Bach & Barb Macke
University Libraries, University of Cincinnati
Sometimes we learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself.