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**ACTIVE LEARNING FROM A TEACHER’S PERSPECTIVE –
WHAT HURDLES COULD ARISE?**

Tetiana Vasylenko

University of Maastricht

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences - Department of Political Science

t.vasylenko@maastrichtuniversity.nl

ABSTRACT

Problem Based Learning is an active learning pedagogical approach which has gained recognition across different disciplines. Unlike in traditional teaching methods, in PBL, students are owners of their own learning rather than passive recipients of information. Learning process is organized around collaborative problem solving in a small-group setting. As a result, students not only acquire enhanced knowledge of the material but develop relevant practical skills, such as cooperation, problem solving and critical thinking. Yet, PBL also brings certain challenges for staff members in their role as facilitators of this student-centered learning. The aim of this article is to shed light on some of these challenges and possible ways of addressing them, drawing on the existing literature and personal experience of the author as a tutor at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Maastricht. The article focuses on the three following challenges: ensuring active participation while keeping a positive classroom atmosphere, managing students’ expectations of a tutor as the main content provider, and experiencing a general feeling of uncertainty as a new PBL instructor.

1. Introduction

As one of the innovative teaching methods, Problem Based Learning (PBL) has attracted wide scholarly attention through different academic disciplines. PBL is an active learning pedagogical approach which views learning as a student-centered collaborative process organized around solving complex open-ended problems. Among the most scrutinized issues are the advantages of using this active learning approach compared to traditional teaching methods. It is generally acknowledged that PBL not only equips students with required knowledge but also better prepares them for their further career by developing relevant practical skills, such as collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication abilities (Timus, Cebotari & Hosein, 2016; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006; Craig & Hale, 2008).

When looking at the advantages and disadvantages of PBL, the existing research mostly focuses on the needs, benefits, and difficulties for learners (e.g. Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006; Maurer & Neuhold, 2012). The research related to staff qualifications and perspectives focuses mainly on the role of a tutor as a facilitator, especially discussing the choice of different facilitation techniques (e.g. Neville, 1999; Azer, 2005; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006; Maurer, 2015). While, generally, it is clear what the facilitating role of a PBL tutor entails, the challenges posed by this role are hardly analyzed. This, however, might be of crucial importance for instructors considering whether to switch from traditional to active learning teaching methods.

The aim of this article is, therefore, to shed light on some of the challenges which might be experienced by PBL tutors (especially those with no or little prior experience in using this approach) and suggest possible ways of tackling these difficulties. The article is based on the author's personal experience as a tutor¹ at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) of the University of Maastricht.

The structure is as follows: First, this article gives a short overview of the main pedagogical principles of PBL. The following section briefly outlines the way PBL is applied at FASoS. The remaining part elaborates on the three challenges experienced by the author related to, firstly, ensuring active student participation while keeping a positive classroom atmosphere, secondly, limiting content-related interventions by the tutor and, thirdly, experiencing a general feeling of uncertainty as a new PBL instructor, as well as suggests possible ways of addressing the identified challenges.

¹ This includes teaching content courses (e.g. Policy domains – Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Comparative Politics and Government, EU Politics) as well as various skills courses (e.g. Negotiation Skills, Case Study Research, Analysing Research Designs) mainly in the first and second year of the Bachelor European Studies programme.

2. PBL: learning as a collaborative process

In PBL, student learning is centered on solving complex real-world problems in a small-group setting. While a group is supervised by a faculty member, students are given ownership of their learning process. In this teaching approach, knowledge is viewed from a social constructivist perspective. According to this viewpoint, instead of being passive recipients of information, students are actively engaged in constructing their knowledge through a collaborative process of problem-solving. This includes linking a problem to students' prior knowledge, looking at it from different perspectives, exchanging ideas and critically evaluating/questioning each other's arguments. At the same time, the role of a tutor shifts from providing students with factual information or correct answers to facilitating collaboration in a group (Barrows, 1996; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006; Savery, 2006; Maurer, 2015).

There is a general logic of how a PBL tutorial proceeds, which different universities might adapt PBL according to their specific interpretation of this method (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Students start by identifying a problem based on the text of a specific assignment and connecting it to their prior knowledge. After identifying gaps in the students' current knowledge, the group proceeds with developing a common set of learning objectives and a strategy for individual learning outside the classroom. The process concludes with students discussing and evaluating possible solutions to the problem based on their new knowledge.

One of the distinctive features of PBL is its emphasis on collaboration in a group. In a traditional classroom, students compete for reporting on the formulated discussion questions. In addition, while one person is answering a certain question, others might not listen to the answer and prepare the next question instead. In such a classroom, the tutor is often the focus of the group's attention and major provider of new knowledge. PBL, by contrast, stresses the importance of collaborative learning. As noted by Maurer and Neuhold (2012), learning in a collaborative environment has several advantages: to begin with, by exchanging different perspectives on a certain problem, students realize the importance of acknowledging alternative views on the matter as well as critically evaluating their own and their peers' arguments. In addition, this collaborative process enhances student understanding of the material which goes beyond mere memorization (*ibid*). This way of acquiring knowledge, often referred to as deep learning, is considered to be one of the strongest merits of PBL (Kaunert, 2009; Maurer, 2015). Finally, Maurer and Neuhold (2012) highlight the role of collaborative learning in developing students' ability to communicate effectively and work in a team. This, in turn, increases students' competitiveness in the job market.

In this student-centered collaborative learning environment, the primary role of a tutor is to facilitate cooperation in a group (Barrows 1996; Azer, 2005; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Maurer, 2015). According to Barrows (1996), in contrast to a traditional teacher, a PBL instructor is not expected to lecture students, give them a correct answer or impose on them what and how to learn. Instead, a tutor should guide students through their learning process by helping them to approach a problem and

facilitating collaboration in a group. Some scholars take this idea even further, claiming that to be a good facilitator, a PBL tutor does not even need to have subject-related expertise (for the overview of the academic debate on the content knowledge of PBL instructors, see Neville 1999).

Despite the relative vagueness of the term facilitator, its importance is widely recognized by different practitioners of PBL and they have identified certain crucial aspects of facilitation. For instance, most scholars highlight the value of asking open-ended questions which do not presuppose mono-semantic answers but stimulate the students' thinking and engage more students in a discussion (e.g. Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Azer, 2005; Maurer, 2015). Another important facilitation element is clarifying and restating students' contributions (e.g. Neville, 1999; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006). This may include reformulating and summarizing main ideas as well as asking students to substantiate their viewpoints. While these and other key facilitating strategies are reviewed at length elsewhere (e.g. Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006), this article focuses on the challenges of being a facilitator in a PBL setting and proposes further ways of overcoming these difficulties based on personal teaching experience.

3. PBL at the University of Maastricht: the seven-step approach

Being one of the pioneers of PBL, Maastricht University has been successfully applying this educational model for more than 40 years. To better guide students through the PBL learning process, the seven-step approach is applied: 1) clarification of main concepts; 2) identification of a problem; 3) brainstorm; 4) systematic classification of the brainstorm; 5) formulation of learning objectives; 6) self-study; 7) post-discussion (for a detailed description of the steps see van Til and van der Heijden, 2009). The first five steps are referred to as the pre-discussion of an assignment. This approach gives students a clear sense of structure which is, as emphasized by Neville (1999), essential in preventing new users of PBL from getting lost in the process. This allows learners to effectively move through a PBL cycle without excessive directive intervention by the tutor.

All programmes at FASOS, including the Bachelor European Studies (BAES), are based on the educational principles of PBL. The learning process is organized in the following way. Students are assigned to small groups of 12-15 participants, with each group being supervised by a faculty member - a tutor. Tutorials last for two hours including a post-discussion of one assignment (60-70 minutes) and a pre-discussion of the next one (around 40 minutes) with a short break in between (5-10 minutes). The discussion is moderated by one of the students, a chair, who is supported by a whiteboard note-taker (for more information on these roles, see Maurer and Neuhold, 2012). At the same time, a tutor is also present as a facilitator of the process whose main tasks are to "support the students in their process of gathering knowledge, encourage them to work together and coach them to study independently" (Tutor BA and MA programmes FASoS, 2016).

It must be noted that the degree of PBL application may vary across the different courses. For instance, in the first-year European Union (EU) Politics content course in the BAES, students

experience ‘pure’ PBL following the seven-step approach. At the same time, in the Analyzing Research Design skills course running in the same period, students receive pre-defined learning objectives. Nevertheless, all courses are designed based on the core principle of PBL which is learning as a student-centered collaborative process. The following sections describe the three challenges of this process identified in the beginning of the article, namely, ensuring active participation while keeping a positive classroom atmosphere, managing students’ expectations of a tutor as the main content provider, and experiencing a general feeling of uncertainty as a new PBL instructor.

4. Challenge 1 – ensuring active student participation while keeping a positive classroom atmosphere

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the main principles of PBL is learning as a collaborative process, with a teacher only being a facilitator of this process. The level of students’ involvement in the discussion and the quality of their contributions, therefore, directly influence the learning results of the whole group. It must be noted, however, that the level of collaboration varies across different groups. It might depend on a number of factors, not least the composition of a group and the background of the participating students. Generally, it is straightforward to implement PBL best practices in a group composed of motivated students possessing strong communication skills. In less active groups, however, using PBL might be particularly challenging. The biggest difficulty then is to uncover the causes of unsatisfactory participation and find the ways of engaging less active students in the discussion.

The reasons for low participation might be very different and go beyond the most evident one, which is poor preparation. In my experience, one of the most common factors influencing the quality of participation in mixed international groups is the significant difference in educational backgrounds and learning styles of the students.² Consequently, some students feel very comfortable with speaking up and sharing their viewpoints, while others are reluctant to participate unless directly called upon by an instructor. Related to this might be another reason, that is a personal lack of confidence and shyness of a student. In my experience, I have worked with a number of well-prepared students who would be willing to share valuable insights into the topic, but only when asked directly. Otherwise, they didn’t feel confident enough to intervene in the group’s discussion. Calling upon students, however, may make them stressed and negatively affect the group dynamics. In addition, pro-active instructor intervention is, to some extent, contradictory to the PBL vision of learning as student-centered process. Lastly, I observed that generally accepted facilitation techniques, such as asking open-ended questions and clarifying students’ contributions, work well in active PBL groups, but they still fail to engage more passive group members. Therefore, the question is how to involve more

² For more information on how learning styles influence students’ attitude towards PBL, see Pungente M.D., Wasan K.M. & C. Moffett (2003).

passive students, while maintaining an open-minded and dynamic atmosphere in a classroom, which gives students ownership of the process.

One possible way of improving participation then is making students interested in a topic by turning abstract into concrete, for instance, connecting abstract (and often theoretical) discussions to the contemporary developments in the EU for content courses and providing practical examples for skills courses. The former is illustrated with the example of the tutorial on the decision-making procedures in the EU within the first-year content course EU Politics. The latter is discussed in the case of the tutorial in the first-year skills course An Introduction to Academic Research and Writing.

4.1. Connecting abstract discussions to the contemporary political developments

The BA European Studies curriculum in Maastricht comprises a rich spectrum of different theoretical, historical and institutional perspectives aiming to explain the development, functioning and complex governance system of the EU. Most of these issues, however, are not tangible topics that students can relate to. This results in complex abstract discussion which are, drawing on my experience in teaching EU Politics and CFSP courses, least appreciated by students. They tend to rush through such tutorials by merely reading their notes and summarizing key points about any given theory, model or concept. The vignette below describes one example of such a situation and presents a possible way of tackling this problem.

Vignette 1 – EU Politics course. Tutorial on the decision-making procedures

EU Politics is a first-year course which aims to provide students with “a basic understanding of the EU and train their academic thinking about the European integration, the EU institutional framework and current challenges” (Course book EU Politics, 2016, p.5). As already mentioned earlier, EU Politics is a pure PBL course making it a suitable example for the purpose of this paper.

One of the key tutorials in this course is dedicated to the complex decision-making in the EU and is crucial for students’ understanding of the Union’s policy-making. The tutorial mostly focuses on the community method of decision-making, namely the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP), consent and consultation procedures. During the discussion, I noticed that the students just read their notes out loud naming the key elements of these procedures. It was clear however that they did not have a proper understanding of the procedures and might forget everything shortly after the tutorial. To prevent this and enhance the students’ ability to understand the process behind any EU decision, I asked the group to analyse the decision-making process of establishing the visa-free regime between the EU and Ukraine and the free trade agreement between the EU and US (TTIP).

It was interesting to observe that when asked how they would analyse these two agreements, the students mimicked a pre-discussion stage of a PBL cycle and developed a mini learning strategy for this exercise. The group suggested to:

- 1) check the relevant articles of the Lisbon Treaty in order to know which decision-making procedure is applied to each of the cases (OLP for the visa-free regime and consent procedure for the TTIP);
- 2) look back at the key stages of the identified procedures;
- 3) identify the current decision-making stage for both cases (using prior knowledge and internet if necessary);
- 4) analyse the progress in negotiations (or absence of such) keeping in mind the specificities of each procedure and preferences of the actors involved.

The students were given half an hour for this exercise. The current political debate about these agreements and related media coverage, made the discussion interesting and less abstract with most students actively contributing to it. As a result, the students not only enhanced their understanding of the decision-making procedures but also improved their ability to analyse the real decision-making process behind different EU agreements.

This vignette demonstrates that connecting abstract topics to the latest political developments makes the discussion more engaging and helps students to go beyond mere memorization, activate their prior knowledge and better understand the essential concepts in the theoretical literature. It must be noted that, ideally, students should be able to derive these references to current events or examples from the text of the assignment. However, in practice, not all assignments are designed in this way. That is why, the tutor may need to address the gap between abstract concepts and concrete examples or applications of the concept. To keep the process student-centered, a tutor might make an explicit agreement with the group that chairing students will be responsible for selecting relevant examples. Asking the chairing student to prepare examples in advance for the pre-discussion (so that students can look for the necessary background information at home) might make the process more time-efficient.

4.2. Facilitating discussion by providing practical examples in skills courses

The application of PBL might be more challenging in skills courses (in the BAES curriculum these are courses related to becoming familiar with and applying research methodology). First, in contrast to content courses, skills sessions rarely leave room for debate or very active discussions. Furthermore, often, the assignments in skills courses do not fully meet the PBL requirements, which makes it more challenging for a tutor to adhere to the principles of PBL. Finally, considering that students work with the same mandatory literature, during the post-discussion, they merely summarize the main points of the assigned readings, which rarely leads to lively debates or discussions within a group. As a result, the PBL discussion might be rather superficial with no collaboration or deep understanding occurring.

In this case, the tutor needs to adapt a more traditional-style directive assignment to meet the aspiration to generate a PBL-style active learning atmosphere in the tutorial. While a tutor cannot

change the text of the assignment, she can take some actions to create a student-centered learning dynamic that encourages more pro-active participation on behalf of the students and more student initiative in leading the tutorial discussion. An example of addressing such a situation is illustrated in the vignette below.

Vignette 2 - An Introduction to Academic Research and Writing course. Tutorial on writing literature reviews.

An Introduction to Academic Research and Writing is a first-year skills course which familiarises students with basic principles of academic research and writing. At the end of the course, students should know how to structure an academic paper, correctly use primary and secondary sources, develop a well-substantiated argumentation and work with feedback (Course book An Introduction to Academic Research and Writing, 2016).

During the course, I noticed that while students were able to summarize main elements of an academic paper in theory, most of them were not able to apply that theoretical knowledge when writing their own drafts. To tackle this problem, for the tutorial on working with sources and writing a literature review, I prepared several examples of anonymised different-quality literature reviews written by the second- and third-year students to be discussed complementary to the regular post-discussion. The tutorial was structured as follows:

- 1) regular post-discussion on how to engage with sources and write a literature review (based on the specific learning goals);
- 2) assessing the literature review examples based on the gained theoretical knowledge.

To organize the discussion and engage all students, the class was divided into the small groups of three. Students were given 10 minutes for discussing each literature review in their respective groups. Upon formulating a shared understanding of a specific example, the groups were asked to select one person to report their conclusions to the rest of the class. It was interesting to observe the variation in evaluations of different groups, which stimulated an active discussion. The same procedure was repeated for the remaining examples with each group being asked to select another student to present their findings.

As a result, by linking their theoretical knowledge to practical examples, students enhanced their understanding of a good literature review with all group members, including the least active ones, being engaged in the discussion.

5. Challenge 2 – managing students’ expectations of a tutor as the main content provider

The second challenge I experienced as a new PBL tutor is related to students’ overreliance on a tutor as an expert on the course content. As mentioned before, while facilitating a group’s learning, a PBL

instructor is not expected to lecture or provide extensive content-related explanations. However, this might be a considerable challenge both for students and tutors, who are new to PBL and more used to a more traditional learning environment which places a great emphasis on the role of the tutor.

Factors motivating tutors to intervene content-wise might be very different. For instance, students tend to give higher evaluations to those faculty members who provide elaborate explanations of the material. However, providing the answers to all students' questions might undermine the incentive for self-study and independent research. It might also result in lower collaboration among students in the group.

The demand for contributions from a tutor exists both during a post- and a pre-discussion stages of a PBL cycle. When it comes to the post-discussion, I observed two most common situations, undermining the role of the tutor as a facilitator. First, when discussing a problem and facing some unclear issues, students immediately address their questions to the tutor, instead of consulting other members of the group. Second, a similar dynamic occurs when students, especially those in the first year of a bachelor program, constantly focus their attention on the tutor, seeking to verify whether their viewpoints are correct. Both cases could potentially force the tutor to switch from the role of a facilitator to the one of a content-provider.

When dealing with the first situation, two simple techniques are helpful in preventing the shift to a teacher-dominated discussion. To start with, the question can be addressed back to the group with the tutor rephrasing it more clearly, if necessary. Considering that most of the questions relate to the information presented in the readings, there is a high probability that other group members will be able to provide the required explanation or clarification. In case of unclear or superficial explanation, the tutor might advise the group to take ten-fifteen minutes,³ look back at the readings and then discuss the question again. However, students might also come up with questions which are relevant but not addressed in the required literature. In this case, the tutor might advise the group to research the issue in question during the self-study and recommend a list of relevant literature. Students will then share the findings in the beginning of the following tutorial. These two ways of tackling the situation allow students to get necessary clarifications without excessive content-related interventions by the tutor.

Addressing the second situation might be more challenging. One of the difficulties is to distance oneself from a group without creating an impression that the tutor is not interested in students' contributions to the discussion or even not listening. More experienced PBL tutors recommend

³ Factual questions will require less time.

different ways of tackling this challenge.⁴ One of the solutions is simply locating yourself outside the group circle instead of sitting in front of the group. The latter almost automatically makes the tutor the center of the group's attention. Another alternative is taking notes about the students' contributions or reading the course manual during the tutorial, thus reducing eye contact with students. It is important, however, to let students know that while taking notes or reading, the tutor still follows the discussion carefully. This can be clarified when discussing the 'house rules' for everyone's conduct in a tutorial during the first meeting.

Concerning the pre-discussion, it can be difficult to avoid tutor intervention during the fifth step of a PBL cycle – developing learning objectives. In my experience, the demand for tutor's intervention was mostly caused by a concern about a potential mismatch between the students' knowledge acquired during the tutorials and the content of the final assessment, especially an exam.

It might be especially challenging to facilitate and encourage students' ownership of the learning process when the final assessment is an exam. In the traditional classrooms, all groups prepare the same set of questions, which will then form a basis for the exam. By contrast, in PBL, different groups' learning objectives might vary. Consequently, one of the major students' concerns is the degree to which their specific learning objectives reflect the content of the exam. It must be noted that this concern is sometimes shared by tutors as well, as they get specific instructions from the course coordinators on the issues that must be covered by the learning goals. As a result, the tutor experiences pressure to intervene into a pre-discussion and nudge students in the 'right' direction in order to cover all material needed for the final exam.

This challenge can be minimized by adapting the final assessment according to the philosophical principles of PBL. For instance, papers as a final assignment format are more suitable for assessing students' knowledge and skills than traditional exams.⁵ In the case of an exam assessment, the questions should be developed in collaboration with all tutors involved in the course in order to bring in a consideration for potential differences in the learning goals to be taken into account.

While being simple, these techniques can help to reduce students' overreliance on a tutor as a content-provider and keep the process student-centered.

⁴ The suggestions are based on the recommendations of the more experienced PBL instructors at FASOS shared during the informal discussions and teaching-related workshops at the faculty. For further practical recommendations on how to organize PBL sessions and address various challenges occurring during tutorials, see Maastricht University YouTube Channel (Maastricht University, n.d.).

⁵ For a discussion on the conformity of different forms of assessment to PBL principles, see Saven-Baden, 2004 and Nendaz & Tekian, 1999.

6. Challenge 3 – general feeling of uncertainty as a new PBL instructor

Another considerable difficulty that an instructor who is not well-versed in using PBL might face is uncertainty about how well he or she is using this method. In my case, I already had some experience with PBL when I joined the faculty as a teaching assistant. I gained my initial experience with this learning method while being a student in the Master European Studies program at the same university. This allowed me to observe a variety of teaching techniques used by the teaching staff to facilitate group learning, which had a different degree of effectiveness. In addition, together with other new colleagues, I participated in the PBL workshop which simulated a regular tutorial and was essential for those who just got acquainted with PBL. However, despite the above-mentioned experience, as well as a lot of self-reflection during the first year of teaching, I still experience some uncertainty in the classroom.

Based on informal discussions with new colleagues at the faculty, feeling uncertainty seems to be common. In a tutor team, we share our best practices as well as discuss different strategies on tackling the occurring difficulties. Nevertheless, it is essential to have a process, or a platform, enabling an exchange of such practices with more experienced colleagues. This would allow not only to get new teaching-related ideas but also better integrate new staff members. At FASOS, such opportunity is available in the process of a one-year BKO training.⁶ As presupposed by the program, each new colleague gets a coach, usually a more experienced and senior colleague, attending the newcomer's classes and providing feedback on his way of teaching. It is important to note that an essential point here is to develop a trusting relationship between the coach and the supervisee, which is a precondition for the latter not to feel pressured and be open for constructive criticism. In addition, the BKO training includes several workshops throughout the year related to the most challenging aspects of teaching and assessment. Overall, participation in the program allows faculty members to acquire new knowledge and skills, cooperate closely with more experienced colleagues, and critically reflect on their own teaching practices.

While this system has a number of advantages, the BKO trajectory starts only in the second year of employment, after new colleagues receive sufficient experience to reflect on. Yet, new staff members would benefit from a more regular and informal exchange of best practices from the very first days of teaching. This could include having more experienced colleagues observing a tutorial led by a new tutor as well as having the option to 'sit in' another colleague's class and observe how the tutorial proceeds. This would, first of all, familiarise new colleagues with different PBL teaching styles and facilitating strategies which were mentioned earlier in the article. Second, this would demonstrate that challenges might occur in any group, be it under a less or more experienced PBL tutor's supervision, and introduce new PBL instructors to different ways of tackling these challenges effectively.

⁶ BKO (in Dutch: Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs) is a Dutch official certificate confirming basic teaching qualifications of university staff. At FASOS, all new faculty members are encouraged to start the BKO trajectory during the first two years of teaching.

7. Conclusions

As a promising active learning pedagogical approach, PBL has received wide recognition across different academic disciplines. While much of the research is focused on the advantages of and difficulties posed by PBL for learners, the aim of this article was to increase the awareness about the challenges this approach brings for tutors in their role as facilitators of students' learning process. The article focused on three difficulties which might be encountered by new PBL instructors: ensuring active participation while keeping a positive classroom atmosphere, managing students' expectations of a tutor as the main content provider, and experiencing a general feeling of uncertainty as a new user of PBL.

In addition to applying common facilitating strategies, such as asking open-ended questions or clarifying students' contributions, the first challenge can be addressed by turning abstract discussions into concrete examples, to which students can easily relate. As demonstrated with the example of the EU Politics course, for instance, connecting abstract topics to the latest political developments in the EU helps to activate students' prior knowledge, makes them more engaged in a discussion, and fosters deep learning, as opposed to mere memorization. To tackle the second identified challenge and avoid teacher-dominated discussions, the tutor can refer students' questions back to the group, give some time for consulting the readings again or agree that certain issues will be researched during the self-study and addressed during the next tutorial. In addition, locating oneself as a tutor outside the group circle can help to shift the center of the group's attention to the group's members themselves, chairing students in particular. Finally, the third difficulty, namely a general feeling of uncertainty as a new PBL instructor, can be reduced by creating a platform for a regular formal or informal exchange of best practices between new and more experienced in PBL colleagues. Considering that one of the key features of PBL is its emphasis on collaboration, cooperation among faculty members should not be underestimated as well.

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