Using Problem-Based Learning (PBL) to Teach Students Workplace Information Literacy Skills

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Problem

A gap exists between the information skills college graduates possess and those their employers expect (Hart Research, 2015; Head et al., 2013).



Fig. 1. Information skills graduates lack.

This gap is caused, in part, by academic information literacy instruction focusing almost solely on using information in an academic environment, when the majority of students will leave academia (Kuglitsch, 2015).

PBL combines teaching pedagogies cited to teach transferable information literacy, including situated learning, inquiry-based learning, self-directed learning, student reflection, and student motivation (Wenger, 2014).

Methods

Databases and Search Platforms

- LISA, LISTA, ERIC
- Google Scholar, Summon/PittCat,

LIS Journals

- Journal of Academic librarianship
- portal: Libraries and the Academy
- Library and Information Research

Education Journals

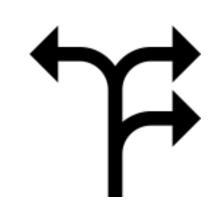
- Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning
- Journal of Information Literacy

Findings

1. Compared to Academia, in the Workplace...



Information is more social, people are sources, and team communication is important (Head, et al., 2013; Hoyer, 2011).



Projects are less defined and employee led. There is less direction and structure (Monge and Friscicaro-Pawlowski, 2014).



Gray literature and freely available online or organizational sources are often prioritized (Head, 2016).

2. Transfer of Information Literacy

Low road transfer - transferring from the original learning situation to a similar context High road transfer - transferring abstract concepts into a different setting Instructors are encouraged to support both types (Kuglitsch, 2015).

Educational theory

- Metacognition
- Reflection
- Learning in context
- Varied examples and contexts
- Active learning
- (Billing, 2007)

Situated or General

Should information literacy be approached as a general skill or framework, or should it be situated within a discipline (Kuglitsch, 2015)?

Employers

80% of employers said it was very important graduates demonstrate they can apply learning in real-world situations (Hart Research, 2015).

Conclusions

Non-Professional Disciplines

Most studies focus on professional programs (ex: engineering and business). Should more attention be paid to other disciplines that do not prepare students for one career path? Could PBL benefit those students?

PBL Implementation

In order to adapt PBL in information literacy instruction, its implementation often strays from the traditional PBL model. Does this impact the effects of PBL on learning and transfer?

Does PBL result in Workplace Transfer?

Only three studies have attempted to investigate how PBL affects the transfer of information literacy skills, even though it is often claimed to do so. Two were conducted in online IL credit-bearing courses. Only one studied how students reported using information outside of an academic environment.

References

For the full list of references, go to www.alicekalinowski.wordpress.com/LOEX, or use the QR code.



3. Problem-Based Learning as a Viable Solution

Definition: PBL is "focused, experiential learning organized around the investigation, explanation, and resolution of meaningful problems" traditionally conducted in face-to-face groups with the instructor acting as a facilitator to guide the students through the process (Hmelo-Silver, 2004, p. 266).

PBL and Information Literacy: It has been used in library instruction in a variety of formats since the early 2000s. (Diagram adapted from Dodd, et al., 2010, p. 132.)

Challenges: Time consuming to prepare and conduct, formulating adequate problems, acting as a facilitator

Opportunities: Different adaptations, potential for improved transfer, encourages engaged learning

