Using Problem-Based Learning to Promote Self-directed Learning at UNLV School of Medicine

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## Why is Self-Directed Learning (SDL) Needed?
It is imperative that medical students develop skills that promote life-long learning and manage the doubling rate of medical knowledge. Through the use of PBL, SDL can be practiced; and both can serve as ongoing learning approaches beyond medical school.

## What is Problem-Based Learning (PBL)?
"...an instructional method characterized by they use of patient problems as a context for students to learn problem-solving skills and acquire knowledge about the basic and clinical sciences" (Albanese & Mitchell, 1993).

## Methods of PBL That Promote Self-Directed Learning:
- Problem solving through data gathering, hypothesizing, and synthesis of relevant information.
- Self-identified learning issues by considering the mismatch between what learner already knows and what additional information is needed to solve the problem.
- Active appraisal of new information.
- Feedback on learning process, application of newly acquired knowledge, and resources used.

## What Research Shows About the Use of a PBL Curriculum
- SDL identified as a hallmark of PBL students (Vernon & Blake, 1993).
- PBL Student beyond the first year of training seemed to display more self-directed learning by studying according to their learning needs and interests rather than strictly according to content of learning issues (Hurk et al., 1999).

## What Students Say About PBL at UNLV School of Medicine
- PBL allows practice of critical thinking and application of knowledge.
- PBL can be used as a means to solidify and expand upon knowledge.
- A great deal of learning was spent in PBL session and the learning issues.

## Helpful Resources


J Sanders & K Walsh (2016) Self-directed learning, Education for Primary Care, 27(2):151-152.


## Steps and How To…
### PBL Steps
- Create case with authentic problem specific to your discipline.
- Students work in small group tutorial to identify the problem(s) and possible solution(s) for specific case.
- Students identify knowledge gaps, learning issues, or subjects of interest for further study.
- Collaborative independent study of corresponding self-assigned topic.
- Students regroup to share new information learnt and apply back to the case.
- Students give feedback to each other on learning process, new knowledge content, applicability to case or other similar situation, and resources used.
- Refine case according to learning objectives or student needs.

### How To
- [https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4b33/287a30cf8bb6bb49e0b95c140f432f6144.pdf](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4b33/287a30cf8bb6bb49e0b95c140f432f6144.pdf)