

PBL academy – first newsletter

Dear colleagues

Hereby the first newsletter from the PBL-academy and the only one that will be sent to all staff. If you are interested in receiving future newsletters from the PBL-academy, we encourage you to sign-up for the newsletter by using the link provided below (here you can also sign-up for a seminar and for a wider PBL-AAU Network).

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHZxTGNzRUN2a2tkWW1qLTl2bHRtX2c6MQ>

If you do not wish to sign-up for a newsletter you can always consult our webpage, where we will also publish the newsletter (www.pbl.aau.dk).

In this newsletter:

- The opening of the PBL-academy - A belated thanks
- Upcoming seminars on PBL (PBL and interdisciplinarity, PBL and creative processes)
- Journal of PBL in Higher Education (JPBLHE)
- Other activities
- Getting involved!

Opening of the PBL-academy – A belated thanks

Hereby a belated thanks to everyone who attended the PBL-academy's opening reception (particularly to those of you who brought presents 😊). We wish to express our thanks to rector Finn Kjærdsdam and Stig Løkke Pedersen for their inspirational speeches, to everyone for questions and comments during the open discussion and for the speeches accompanying the following reception.

One key point that came up during the open discussion was a question relating to the potential return of group exams. Currently, it seems that group exams will be returning from September 1st and even though the form and extent has to be negotiated, there will probably be a need to discuss, introduce or re-introduce this particular form of assessment. We are currently debating how we might be able to support this in the PBL-academy, and value any inputs or ideas, while also encouraging study boards and schools to start thinking about how old and new colleagues can come together to discuss and develop the model.

For those who were not able to join the opening day, we did record the event. However, we have learned that the sound is missing from some (parts) of the presentations. We are therefore looking into whether it makes sense publishing parts of the video material.

Upcoming seminars on PBL

29 March 2012 (14.00 – 16.00) – PBL and Interdisciplinarity

One key characteristic of Problem Based and Project Oriented Learning is the potential for working across and in-between disciplinary boundaries. With this seminar the PBL Academy would like to initiate a debate and get inputs on how we may take advantage of problem based learning in integrating disciplines both within and across study programs at Aalborg University.

The seminar also relates to the recent initiative of establishing a “Solution Hub”. The Solution Hub is a cross-school initiative at AAU with the goal of establishing a physical location for interdisciplinary collaboration – a hub –where students can work on a large-scale project formulated by an external partner. Solution Hub will be realized as large-scale, interdisciplinary problems where groups of students work together on addressing these grand challenges which require multiple disciplinary perspectives. The seminar will include three presentations followed by discussion.

- Introduction to the idea of a “Solution Hub” (representative from the Solution Hub board)
- Margit Saltofte Nielsen will present ideas on how one can work with and supervise students who do interdisciplinary work – based in experiences from Techno Anthropology
- Christina Grann Myrdal will present insights and findings from her study on PBL within Engineering

Some of the questions that emerge when considering integrating or transcending disciplines and studies and could be taken up for discussion during the seminar are:

- How may PBL support interdisciplinarity?
- What are the challenges of interdisciplinary work?
- How may study programs be designed to allow students to engage with students from other programs?
- Which are the requirements placed on teachers and supervisors when working across disciplines and programs?

The seminar will take place 29 March – 14.00–16.00. Location will be announced when we have a better overview of the number of participants. Please sign up by using the link provided in the beginning of the newsletter (or below):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHZxTGNzRUN2a2tkWW1qLTI2bHRtX2c6MQ>

In development! May or late summer – PBL and creative processes

We are currently working together with the Utzon Center and representatives from Architecture and Design on developing a seminar on PBL and creative processes. This could include e.g. spaces, forms and pedagogies to support creativity, play, intuition and art in PBL-processes, but the foci are currently under development.

Your ideas for a seminar?

If you, or your research group, have ideas for particular aspects of PBL, which you think could have wider interest, do let us know, as we are happy to act as sparring partners, co-developers/co-organisers, and would be glad to help with links to other people interested in same aspects and in calling for wider participation.

Journal of PBL in higher education (JPBLHE)

We are currently in the process of establishing a journal titled “Journal of PBL in Higher Education”. In line with the AAU Open Access Policy and the recent signing of the Berlin Declaration, we aim for the journal to become an Open Access journal. Technically, it will be run on the Open Journal System (OJS) which is currently provided by the State and University Library (Statsbiblioteket) and published by Aalborg University Press. We should like to thank AUB (Nils Thidemann and Maria O. Madsen) for their help and support with the Open Journal System and many other issues related to establishing a journal. Should other be considering establishing a Journal and using OJS, we can highly recommend that you contact AUB for (excellent) support. We are currently working on setting up the editorial board, establishing an organization and workflow, developing first call for papers and defining aims and scope of the journal, and much more! Should you be interested in hearing more about the journal or participating in the running of the journal, do let us know.

Other activities

Together with a number of people and environments (e.g. Learning Lab, UNESCO Chair, ELSA, e-Learning Lab) we are currently looking into how we can further strengthen or develop courses on PBL, PBL and ICT, and PBL as a course pedagogy.

Getting involved!

The PBL Academy was established with an explicit mission to contribute to an active and institution wide network of lecturers and researchers with interests within Problem Based Learning at Aalborg University. We know there are many committed and active colleagues who conduct research projects, design learning environments and document their work within settings of PBL, and we would like to hear from all of you!

The intentions of a AAU PBL Network are:

- To create a network where dedicated colleagues can discuss and develop new approaches to teaching and learning at a PBL university
- To encourage small and large scale research projects where researchers from different environments collaborate on exploring issues relating to PBL
- To facilitate a forum for sharing PBL resources and to get anyone interested in PBL involved with developing research and/or teaching resources.

So, please come forward – all of you who share an interest in continuing the development of our PBL model at Aalborg University. To sign up for participation in and more information about the AAU PBL network follow the link where you can also sign up for the Newsletter and the seminar on 29 March:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHZxTGNzRUN2a2tkWW1qLTl2bHRTX2c6MQ>