

PBL academy – third newsletter, October 2013

Dear colleagues

Hereby the first out of the two newsletters, we expect to send out from the PBL-academy in 2013. We all hope that you have had a nice summer vacation. For the PBL academy, spring 2013 can be characterized by strategic discussions, ongoing activities and last but not least the first issue of the “Journal of PBL in Higher Education” (JPBLHE) is now online [here](#).

Based on experiences from pedagogical activities in all faculties at AAU, the PBL academy board has pointed to the following three crosscutting themes, where we see a need for development: Flexible learning Environments, Progression of PBL competences throughout the study and Intercultural competence.

The PBL academy is coordinating activities within these areas, but we are strongly dependent on collaborations, ideas and contributions from researchers and practitioners within the field of PBL – that is YOU.

In this newsletter:

- First issue of the Journal of PBL in Higher Education (JPBLHE)
- Revision of the AAU folder on PBL principles
- Flexible learning environments as a strategic focus area
- Progression of PBL competences throughout the study as a strategic focus area
- Intercultural competence as a strategic focus area
- Films about the new project exam – remember to use them
- Update on ongoing outreach activities
- Update on ongoing ad-hoc activities – the PBL help-desk

First issue of the Journal of PBL in Higher Education (JPBLHE)

The journal titled “Journal of PBL in Higher Education” has been established and the first Volume is now available [here](#).

We are very happy that the first issue has received great worldwide and national response, which provides a good platform for obtaining uptake in the national bibliographic research indicator, and internationally by registered citations and a recognised impact factor.

The issue is composed of fifteen research papers that, from our reading, fall within four thematic areas:

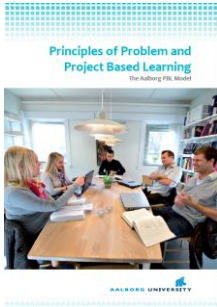
- Theories, principles and philosophy of PBL in Higher Education
- Case studies of PBL and reflections on PBL in practice
- Implementing PBL or principles of PBL

- PBL and networked learning

We encourage you to contribute to forthcoming issues of this journal.

Please find more information on submitting a paper [here](#).

Revision of the AAU folder on PBL principles



The PBL academy will coordinate a revision of the folder "Principles of Problem and Project Based Learning" - see the publication [here](#).

The primary purpose is to make sure that the publication corresponds to the developments in the model. The process is that the PBL academy in collaboration with the rectors office clarify the areas in need for revision and appoint a group to carry out the revision. A new draft is expected to be available ultimo 2013.

Flexible learning environments as strategic focus area

The increased intake of students challenges the use of physical space to carry out PBL. But such challenges can also be a stepping-stone to foster new and more flexible learning environments aligned with the diversity of learning objectives. The question is whether all clusters of learning objectives have the same need for physical space, and if not, whether this leads to change and introduction of more flexible learning environments. The process have started this autumn 2013, were the first step has been to establish a steering group with broad faculty and campus representation.

Progression of PBL competences as a strategic focus area

When training staff and educating students to master the PBL methodology one approach has been to introduce PBL in a course setting, and then shift to a learning by doing strategy supported by project supervision and reflection on practice. In this way students have developed PBL competences throughout their study – but the progression in PBL competences is in many cases implicit in the study regulations. In this development project, we will focus on the progression of PBL competences at Bachelor as well as at Master level. This process will be initiated in Spring 2014.

Intercultural competence as strategic focus area

Aalborg University has an increasing intake of students from abroad; and often these students enter at Master level. The challenge is to cope with this in a way where we take advantage of the synergy of this diversity and use the PBL environment to create a platform for development of intercultural competences. Throughout the University initiatives have been taken to train students entering the university at master level on the AAU PBL learning environment. In this development project, we will collect experiences of these training activities, support seminars among lecturers within this field and report on different strategies to introduce international students to PBL in order to enhance intercultural competences for all students. This process will be initiated in Autumn 2014.

Films about the new project exam – remember to use them



The PBL academy has supported the production of films for all faculties, with a Danish as well as English speaker, to introduce you to the new project exam. If you have not yet seen the film, please find the films at:

<http://www.pbl.aau.dk/Resources++Group+exams/>

Update on ongoing outreach activities

The next visitors' workshop for international partners is 7-8 November 2013. If you recommend the workshop to partners, please be aware that the price for the workshop is 500 EUR per participant. Food, drinks etc. included. Please find more information [here](#).

Update from the PBL contact-point

During 2011 and 2013 the members from the PBL academy board members have experienced that a lot of work in the PBL academy has been put into providing what we could call a PBL contact point. At this "contact point" the members of the PBL academy mainly redirect the incoming requests to online PBL resources, to courses offered on PBL or in ad-hoc situations to qualified personnel who can help with the specific and often urgent request.

The PBL academy is doing a lot of work to make this PBL contact-point as efficient as possible, which also means that the PBL academy has to have an overview of the PBL resources across AAU; and make an effort to create easy access. This we have done together with the HR-department as a smaller part of the University's action plan on improving the learning environment (studiemiljøet) in Aalborg University. By contact to the study-boards, we have collected insights from practitioners e.g. methods and literature on conflict management or inputs on how group formation processes can best be facilitated.

You can contact the PBL contact-point at pbl@pbl.aau.dk

We hope that many of you have found this newsletter of interest and that you will join in on the work to continuously develop PBL at AAU.

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The PBL academy management board

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