

AN INTRADISCIPLINARY PBL-LIKE STRATEGY TO TEACH BIOCHEMISTRY

Bayardo B. Torres

Departamento de Bioquímica, IQ-USP, C.P. 26077, 05508-900, São Paulo, SP

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a successful teaching/learning strategy extensively field-tested mainly in Medicine schools. Nevertheless it is very hard to implement for it is a kind of all or nothing institutional decision. Aiming at developing in the students some of the skills provided by PBL we have employed in an introductory biochemistry course a pedagogic strategy based on a sequence of four steps. (1) Each unit is introduced by some problems that the students are not supposed to be able to solve with their existing knowledge. Students should provide a written list of all the information they think they will need to solve the problems. This activity overturns the traditional procedure: the students are asked to produce questions instead of answers, gathering an extensive list of questions. (2) The study of the unit contents, carried out in collaborative small groups and guided by educational objectives, previously prepared by the teachers and situated at low levels of cognitive taxonomy. While studying the subject, the students' doubts are gradually being solved. (3) Group discussion of new and more complex problems at high cognitive level. (4) Retrieval and check of the problems and the list of questions generated in step 1. The students verify that they have now the answers to both the problems and to their own questions and have a clear evaluation of how much they have learned.

Key words: pbl-like strategy, collaborative learning, metacognition