


Common Challenges in Facilitating Problem-Based Learning sessions: Managing Dysfunctional Groups

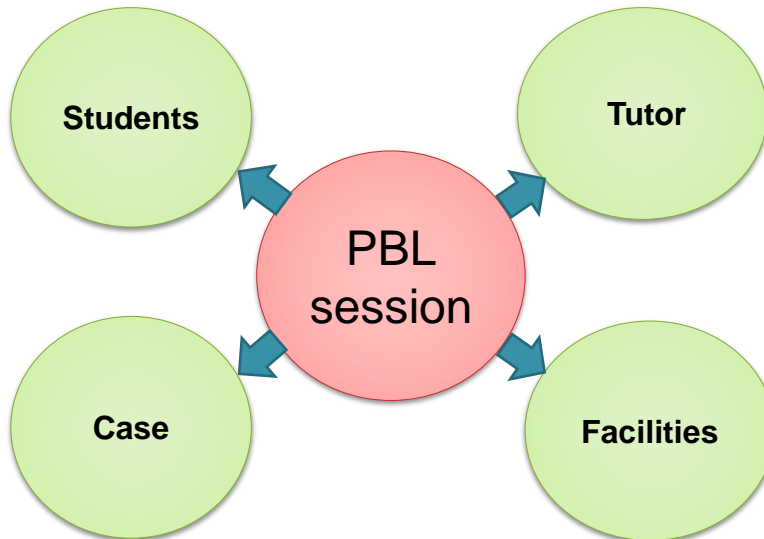
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Framework:

| | |
|---|------------|
| Introduction and basics | 10 minutes |
| Small group discussion: Participants' experience in facilitating small groups, working in small groups on strategies how to manage dysfunctional groups | 25 minutes |
| Proposed strategies and take home message | 10 minutes |
| Question time | 10 minutes |

Main components of the PBL



Common questions:

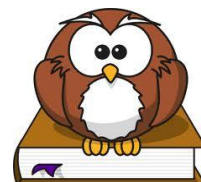
- Is there anything I need to do when I first commence my role as the group's facilitator?
- How can I ensure that my group is moving in the right direction?
- How can I facilitate the discussion without dominating the group?
- How can I encourage elaboration of knowledge?

Non-negotiable Ground Rules:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Using white boards, **think aloud**
- Compulsory steps:
 - Identification of a problem
 - Hypothesizing
 - Recording relevant information
 - Identifying learning objectives
- Regular reflection and evaluation of the group dynamic and individuals' progress

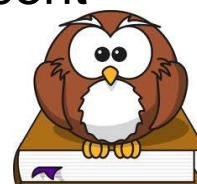
Student centred environment:

- Empower students, not control
- Do not rush to ask questions or provide information, give this opportunity to the students
- Monitor your interactions and reflect upon



Role modelling:

- Be prepared for the tutorial
- Come on time
- Ask students for feedback
- Acknowledge mistakes
- Create professional portfolio
- Update knowledge on recent developments in PBL



Possible students roles:

- Chairman
- Scribe
- Group recorder
- Additional resources' manager
- Group representative



Working in Small Groups discuss previous experience in dealing with problems while teaching – 15 min

Ranking of group problems by tutors and students, where 1 - most frequent and 12 - least frequent and hindrance to learning of group problems as rated by students and where 5 - strongly agree, 1 - strongly disagree.

| Problem | Tutor ranking | Student ranking | Hindrance to learning |
|--|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Quiet student—very quiet, rarely contributes to discussion, shy | 2 | 1 | 2.0 |
| Lateness, absenteeism—student arriving late or not turning up for tutorials | 1 | 2 | 2.7 |
| Dominant student—talks a lot, tries to control the direction of discussion, prevents others from contributing | 3 | 3 | 3.6 |
| Psychosocial | 5 | 4 | 2.7 |
| Tutorial process (the group and/or clinical reasoning process) is disorganized, haphazard or 'sloppy' | 6 | 5 | 3.5 |
| Lack of commitment—student not making an effort to participate properly, implying that PBL is not useful | 4 | 6 | 2.9 |
| Group or students express frustration with the tutor's lack of content-expertise | 12 | 7 | 3.4 |
| Personality clash—student not relating well to another student | 7 | 8 | 3.2 |
| Group engages in superficial study of the problem | 9 | 9 | 3.7 |
| Group 'shortcuts' the tutorial process by combining sessions | 8 | 10 | 2.9 |
| Group rushes through tutorials to get the 'diagnosis' or finish early | 10 | 11 | 3.4 |
| Bullying—student(s) teasing or 'picking on' others making others the subject of jokes | 11 | 12 | 2.8 |

Managing Dominant Students:

Facilitator's actions:

- Allocate expert roles
- Using "buddy system"
- Group feedback on everyone's participation
- Directly approach a student outside the tutorial

Students' actions:

- Using gentle indirect coercion
- Rotating roles
- Time restriction
- Ignoring or telling them to be quiet.

Managing Quiet Students

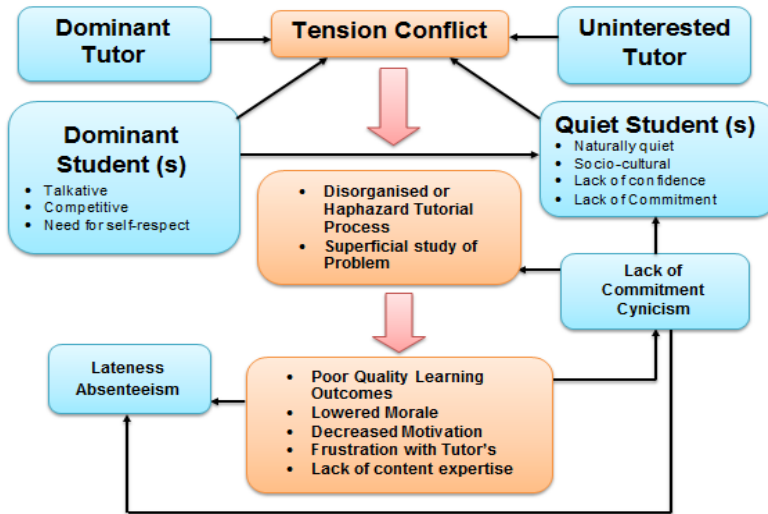
Facilitator's action:

- Ask other students to involve "quiet" members in discussion
- Compulsory minimal report back to the group
- Bringing concerns to the group
- Approaching individually

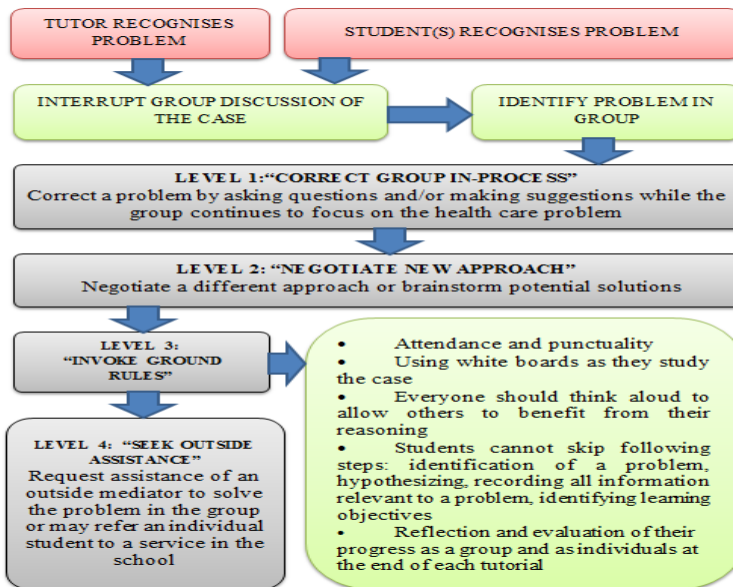
Students' actions:

- Finding out a quiet student's area of expertise
- Giving time to answer
- Enquiring about the underlying reasons
- Confronting in a non-judgemental way

PBL group dysfunction:



Levels of interventions:



PBL Process Evaluation – How did I do?

On a scale of a 1-5 score (1 = Very poor; 5 = Excellent)

How do you feel that you have performed in this problem case?

| Skills: | Score |
|--|-------|
| Group skills. I actively participated in the work of the group showing a sensitivity to group needs as well as self needs and demonstrating respect for the aspirations of all members of the group | |
| Learning skills. I effectively identified group and individual learning needs and identified the appropriate learning resources | |
| Reasoning skills. I demonstrated an ability to critically evaluate information, to synthesize and to critically appraise data. | |
| Feedback skills. I demonstrated an ability to provide constructive feedback to the group, promoting the group's ability to learn. | |
| In terms of "Interest" I would rate this case as: | |
| Overall I would rate our group performance in this case as: | |


AND (One sentence only)

1. I could do better in the following:

2. I feel I did a good job in the following:

Take home message:

- Creation of student-centered facilitation style
- Sharing your experience with colleagues
- Regular evaluation of the group dynamic



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Thank you for your attention!



Zaporozhian Cossacks Writing a Letter to the Turkish Sultan (1880-1891)

