



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

How Effective is Problem-based Learning?

Editor:

Readers of this journal will no doubt have been aware of the debate on the effectiveness of Problem-based Learning (PBL) that took place in the journals of *Academic Medicine* (Colliver, 2000a) and *Medical Education* (Albanese, 2000; Colliver, 2000b; Norman & Schmidt, 2000) last year. The debate is important and timely. PBL and/or derivatives of it are being widely implemented not only in medical schools but also in the curricula of other disciplines such as nursing. The debate highlights the need for more research in this area including theoretically informed programme evaluations and expanded methodologically rigorous systematic reviews.

The Project on the Effectiveness of Problem Based Learning (PEPBL) is a research project funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council's Teaching and Learning Research Programme (<http://www.ex.ac.uk/ESRC-TLRP/>). The project is aiming to make a small contribution to our understanding of PBL in two ways: first, by conducting a methodologically rigorous randomized controlled trial of PBL in two Continuing Professional Education programmes for nurses; and second, by conducting a systematic review of PBL that will be registered with the Campbell Collaboration (<http://campbell.gse.upenn.edu/>). If you would like to know more about the project, further information can be obtained from our website: <http://www.hebes.mdx.ac.uk/teaching/Research/PEPBL/index.htm>.

We would also like to hear from readers of this journal who may be interested in getting involved in the systematic review and/or who may have any knowledge of unpublished research studies of PBL or similar teaching and learning strategies that may be relevant to this review.

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